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UNDER THE JACK-STAFF

CHESTER BAILEY FERNALD

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UNDER THE JACK-STAFF

BY

CHESTER BAILEY FERNALD

AUTHOR OF "THE CAT AND THE CHERUB"
AND OTHER STORIES

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1903

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THE LIGHTS OF SITKA

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THE LIGHTS OF SITKA

HER name was the gunboat *Lexington*, with sixes in the fore and aft of her, and a row of invidjus pop-guns arrayed in her side. 'T was a new cruise, and we laid several days waiting word, with the newspapers stirring up wars by the day. First we was bound for China, says they, to pull up the roots of the emperor's pigtail for being a pagan; and next we was sailing for Samoa, to boulyverse the nigger on its throne; and the same day they had us running down forty knots an hour to Chile, to blow off the peaks off the Andes, and conquer the country with a file of blue bottle marines. And any of us that was right in his mind give it no thought, the sea being the sea, and wishes crank craft in a gale; but there was two aboard that was cross-eying themselves with their noses in the newspapers, one a bo's'n's mate named Oliver Peck, which no one would trust him in the shadow of a candle, and the other a pink little lad named Ellerson, that was new to his drill, and home-sick as the divil in heaven. 'T was only a crazy twist

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of good fortune, says they, that would steam us to a place called Corvana; which I never heard of it before, but they said 't was the prettiest port south of paradise. It was circumstantial that them two, which distasted each other like oil and water, should wilt for sake of the small spot; and 't was me luck to find why. We up for Puget Sound; for the mayor of Corvana was having a party in his back grass-yard, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the town, and git himself reëlected, and the *Lexington* was to let no foreign power interfere with the Highland fling.

Then little Ellerson turned flipflops clean round the capstan, and old Peck was that pleased that I seen him smile. But when I drew me first bead on Corvana I filled it with hard words, for 't was three streets and a moth-eaten wharf of a town, that looked like 't was robbed from the floor of the sea. But what was gnawing old Peck and young Ellerson was plain: 't was a young girl, and I seen her countenance standing on the pier.

Faith she was something to look at—that sweet and true ye could find it in her face; and little, and trimmed in black, with the scrap of a hanky slung in her belt, and two feet, begad! like kittens peeping from under a door-step. Her eyes was that baby-blue it made ye think of a fine day at home, no matter where ye lived, and her mouth that inviting ye wished there was more of it. And every time ye looked at her ye looked at her again. And when ye seen the beating of her heart that Ellerson should be first ashore, ye asked yourself, What would she be to that rubber-faced Oliver Peck?

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One day would be little Ellerson's liberty, and the next would be Peck's, each steaming up the same street, and never back till the tick of boat-time. And with Peck ashore little Ellerson would be blue as a sounding-lead, and with Ellerson ashore Peck would be ugly as himself. And seeing that the black-hearted bo's'n's mate had it in for the lad, I laid alongside of little Ellerson, whence many a pleasant cross-parlance we had. Especially would he take his pipe of an evening, and smoke up his thoughts about womenkind, which to him was angels from heaven by virtue of white starch. 'T was painful and pretty to hear, for every woman that is bad, he would say, is bad because of some evil man with a stovepipe hat, he would say, and none so bad but the spark of saints and martyrs is lurking inside. And I talked to him awkward, for divil an answer I knew when I thought of me female reminiscences in ten different tongues. But he stuck by me close, and would take comfort in it, and Clarence O'Shay would set staring at his remarks like a wooden owl. Till one day little Ellerson says, would we be going ashore with him to pay his respects to a fine-looking lady? And we polished ourselves to the occasion.

'T was a little house the big of a horse-car, and the grandmother sat laid up in a wheel-chair, with posies climbing all over the porch. Then Ellerson stood the two of us in a row, and says he:

"These is me two shipmates. The squat one, with the two little bandy legs, and the look like a milestone," says he, "is Mr. O'Shay; and the spider-legged one, with his hands dangling at his knees, is Mr.

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Lannigan—Sudden Lannigan, they call him; and together the two invented the tricks of the trade. Consider yourself knocked down to 'em," says he.

And with that the young girl hauled off with a broken tea-pot, and give us tea from it with no apologies, but her smiles made ye feel at home in your shoes. And Clarence O'Shay would be all the time looking at her with his mouth hanging open like a bag, so that I first lacked the parts of speech with me embarrassment at him; but the girl stood by, and would talk of the sea, which even the name of it scared her.

"For I hear once," says she, "that the sea was all sweet as tea, but 't was made salt by the sailors' wives a-weeping on the shores of it."

And she would be asking many inquiries, saying, was the *Lexington* free from sinking qualities, and when was the next war, and how many of us would be killed at the first discharge of our guns? And I says, have no fear, for the foreign dis'greements of Uncle Sam was all in his own living-space—which I slapped O'Shay between his shoulder-pits to wake from his hypnotism. "It 's Heaven's own truth—every inch of it!" says he, coming to himself. And on the way I expostulated to him the meaning of it. And when was we going there again? says he; but I told him the little girl was Ellerson's. For of Peck she spoke never a word, though Oliver himself was forever praising the charms of her.

Then come the cogitation of the powers what next to do with the ship; and the Secretary-grandmother of the Navy called in the President to him, and the

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cabinet, and the Supreme Court, and they all sat screwing their eyebrows on it for ten days, till the old man got his telegraph from Washington, saying, "Go where ye please." Whereby the skipper says to himself, "We 'll take a cargo of time to Alaska," that being the paradise free from statesmen.

And the day before we sailed I went by request to the little girl. Straight up in the wind she came, with eyes flying red signals, though she tried to smuggle the reason of it. Mr. Ellerson, says she, was such a true friend of the family, says she, and so hard to part with him! War was coming, says she, for the newspapers said it, though 't was not yet decided who we should fight. And would n't I hold little Ellerson behind me door to protect the enemy from hurting him? And with that she let loose with her weeping like the breaking of a dike, and I stood shifting me feet and fingering me cap, and saying I 'm a dom fool, till I laid hold of the parts of speech.

"*I* 'll bring him to ye!" then says I, shaking me fist at her. "There 's a deal more ink to be spilt than blood," says I; "and most of the fighting is after dark, by them big-head reporter men with glasses."

"I knowed ye 'd do it," says she, sopping the tears; "for it 's you that 's strong and brave and wise," says she; "and you would n't let him come to harm, would ye?"

And I says, not by the chin of St. Patrick would the divil himself harm a hair of his head. And I got under steerageway, badly choked with emotions.

And when we hove up and begun to show heels to Corvana, there she was, standing on the pier, so

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blasted fine! Her little pocket doily was swabbing of her eyes one by one, till O'Shay filled his pipe with oakum by mistake; and Oliver Peck was waving his fin from the stern; but her dry light was glued to the for'ard six, forninst which was leaning little Ellerson, sometimes smiling, sometimes snuffling to himself. I looked along the swash of us, and took me last sight at the little girl waving her hanky the big of a postage-stamp, with the pink setting sun shrinking in its size behind her, and I gulped, and I says to meself, "It 's Lannigan will bring him home safe and sound to ye, or Lannigan will break a nerve!"

We lost one man by French leave at Corvana, which give a new station-bill, with Ellerson at Peck's command. And at fire-drill I seen Peck working him up, dealing him all the vituperation that should be evenly distributed among the boys. And that night I wiggled me thumb at old Peck, and says I, "Luff, ye beggar, or I 'll expostulate to ye!"

So that night little Ellerson freed himself about her, and I 'll never forget the velvet of his voice with the little girl's name. She was orphan on one side, says he, and on the other her father was lost at sea. Small pence they had, with the grandmother laid up in ordinary and kept afloat by the apothecary; and the one that hauled 'em out of the mud once or twice, and would take the girl for salvage, was Oliver Peck himself—that was husband to her aunt that died. "But for me," the snake would whisper to her, "ye 'd long been sent to the divil for bread. For the world is that hard," he would say in the ear of the innocent lass, "that no man will lift his hand for ye on respec-

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table terms—no man except me, that will give ye me name and a decent life," says he. And she, the poor little skiff, was drifting to it, though she 'd rather charm vipers than look the black Satan of a Peck between his eyes. And she grew white, and promised to marry him, when along come little Ellerson.

From the sight of him, the pink little saint, 't was all over with Oliver. First she put in for a stay of proceedings, and then she rose up and would die before she 'd be spliced to him. And Peck swore to her, and says, begad! he 'd fix the two of 'em for doing him out of his own; and little Ellerson offered to fight him abaft the court-house; but says Peck, "You 're a boy." Then it was Ellerson that had the right of line, and she took on weight, and looked like a new-painted posy, when of a sudden Ellerson had lost his billet on the Puget Sound boat; and the marrying must be postponed, with Peck laying off and on, and mentioning himself again, being softy, and saying 't was a child's fascination she had for the lad, no doubt; that must now enlist for want of a job. And Peck made the young greenhorn take money for reaching Mare Island to present himself, which divil knows how, but he paid it back from his first two months, though the obligation left him uncomfortable close with one that hated him.

And when the *Lexington* dropped into Corvana it was several months gone by. The little girl met him with the eyes of long nights awake, and says she, "I 'll not be promised to ye no longer, for I 'll not load ye with one that has nothing, and could only be a weight to your spirits," says she, "and maybe would

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make a poor wife anyway." And first little Ellerson kissed her, and then mildly he cussed her, and then he kissed her again; but not an inch would she be budging, saying only that Peck she would not marry, and saying no more. But when the last parting come, she up and kissed him smack on his forehead, and give him a push in the chest, and run in and slammed the door in his face; and by this he took main reliance in favor of her loving him, though he was doubtful if whether she would n't have kissed him in his mouth if so, and would wonder if maybe she had n't aimed at his mouth anyway, but missed it by firing too soon at the wrong elevation. Then, in a while, the lad was afraid the girl might tire of life and so marry old Peck, and his mouth hauled down with every turn of the screw. For he says how Peck had beseeched her every day at Corvana, and how now, when she followed the ship to Seattle by rail, old Peck would easy git ashore for his being petty officer's mate, though for Ellerson 't would be hard, since the ship would only lay to for twenty-four hours—the time it takes a navy officer to telegraph his last ten words to the Department. But I says to him, "Ye 'll go ashore by accident"; for I knowed old Peck would be prevaricating himself to freedom, which he did.

'T was a smoke-fog night on the Sound, and the sun went below looking the color of an amber mouthpiece, and then come dry blackness without a drop of dew on a hand-rail; and if ye put your hand out ten feet before ye 't was invisible. From a boatman I chartered a bit of a soap-box, and at the right time I sent little Ellerson by the board, with instructions

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to keep his head inside of his box till it floated from sight. And he went. I can hear him this minute, with his eager young smile looking in me ear. "God bless ye, old man!" says he; "'t was Heaven sent ye to be me friend." And with that he dropped away soft in the tide, swimming with his head in the box, like the man in front of the stage at the opera. He went off diagonizing toward the shore, and I knowed in an hour the little girl would be weeping on his collar.

And scarce had the fog swallowed him when off come the launch, with old Peck smiling satisfied to himself, and he walked about for'ard, wishing Ellerson would see him in his content; and he would be all the time singing to himself a heaving lay, which the sound of it is photographed on me mind as though with a chisel:

He had a wife at Callao,
At Rio dee Janeerio,
At Rotterdam and Tokio,
At Cairo, Cannes, and Malta.
A wife he had at Killisnoo,
At Singapore and Sebeeroo,
At Mozambique and Timbuctoo,
At Boston and Gibraltar.

A single-hearted man was *he;*
You need not speak of bigamie;
Because his wife was Rosylie,
And she sailed with him on the sea.

And at eight bells he went on duty aft, and I stowed meself in the dark near him, at risk of reprimand for being there off watch. "Where 's Ellerson?" says Peck. "Gone ashore in imitation of a cake of soap,"

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says I; "and the one that peaches on him will settle with me and with the ancestors that 's left behind me!" Then old Peck dropped his humming, and gripped the chain-rail till it creaked, and I heard the profanation escaping from him like the after-gas from a rifle; and in a minute says he, "Ye 'll be sorry some day for putting your nose in places that don't fit it." And says I, "I 'll operate me own nose." And he said no more, though we waited four hours in the dark; but the black snake was conniving in his heart.

'T was near midnight when I heard little Ellerson's whistle floating on the tide, and the navigator that was officer of the deck that night was getting ready to be relieved, and would be going to fondle his charts, being a crank fresh from the Hydrygravic Office. I leaned over and give a sneeze, which was the countersign between me and Ellerson; but then Oliver Peck worked his trick on me. "There 's an incandescent lamp died last night, in the chart-house, sir," says he; "and the man with the store-room key is in his hammick, sir." And the navigator says, "Then send one to wake him up and git a new lamp," which Peck turned to me, as being his support there by rights, and says, "Git the lamp," and I hurried to do it, having no choice, for Peck had the call on me. But I would not rob the sleep of the carpenter's mate, robbing instead the nearest lamp-cage between decks; and I says to meself, "Ye misunderstood the order, and ye thought 't was for the captain's smoking-room." And so with the lamp I made a dive for that place, which was a bit of a coop in her stern-frames, and by midnight the quietest place aboard. The ports was too

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small for me head. But I heard the loud whisper of little Ellerson, that thought it was me, though 't was Peck, leaning over above.

"Hurrah!" says the lad; "she 's mine!" says he. "We 'll be spliced next year, and take the chances of life together. And it 's you, old man, that 's to blame for me good luck!"

And then says Peck, with a voice like a stone, "I did n't know it. Maybe ye think I 'm Sudd Lannigan!" and the lad in the water give an "Oh!" with confusion that ye could hear it in the dark. "Bring along the box as ye come," says Peck, growling; "I 'd be going ashore that way meself. Take a stiff hand on it, now!" says he, throwing him the halyard end. And I heard him hard hauling it in over the scupper, and his grunting, and the dripping of the soap-box in the dark, and I says to meself, little Ellerson was being hoisted aboard, box and all. And then I thought of meself, and made out from the smoking-room in me stocking-feet; and as I went I seen Ellerson's leg swing by the port, with the box tied to his toe, and the next second I heard a splash in the water, as of the box, and I says to meself, little Ellerson had fooled him, and glad I was.

I put me lamp in its place in the chart-house in the nick of time, and I went for'ard, looking for Ellerson. But his hammick was yet in its place in the berthing, and I seen no signs of him, and I hunted the living-space through, and the platforms, and every place that would hold him. Then I tumbled up again, and made me way, at the risk of reprimand, back to the poop. "Where is he?" says I to Peck, that was standing

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handhold to the rail. "Where is who?" says Peck, giving a jump because I come upon him barefoot, and looking ready to deal me one. "The lad, of course," says I. "How do I know where he is?" says Peck, in a way that was new to him. "Am I detailed to nestle him?" says he, jerking it out; and I stood looking at him, steaming with the lust of smashing his head. "The boy just passed for'ard," then says Peck, looking at the deck; "and he talked of getting his coin and slipping his cable. I suppose he 's swum ashore by this. Now leave me alone, man," says Peck; "for I 'm off me feed this night!"

And I trotted back and searched for the boy once more in every place a man could fit, living or dead; and a whirling set up in me head, for there was divil a sign of him, and his coin still in the toe of his boot in his bag. Then I set down to reason, being frightened at the conundrum of it, and me eyes sticking out of me head. "Bad—bad it smells!" says I to meself; "for ye heard his whistle, and ye seen his head floating back invisible, and then ye heard his voice, and seen his foot with it tied to the box; then ye heard a splash! Ah, ye blithering fool!" I yelled to meself, in a whisper; "if he come aboard at all he was wet to his skin with water, and tracks of him is plain on the deck! And if not, then what was the splash?" Then I rose in the air, and charged with all me feet for the poop of her, no matter what officer stood in me way, but only praying me legs to git there, with me breath playing tricks and me heart between me teeth; but the deck stuck to me soles like fly-paper. "Ye 'll never git there at all!" says I to meself, with groans,

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and I let out me full contents of imprecation. And as I come thundering over the ladder to the poop I seen a vision in the middle of the dark astern of her. I seen a dear little lass trimmed all in black, with a little white hanky flying from her fingers; and she stood on the pier, and grew smaller and smaller till she was ten thousand miles away; and I heard her voice saying in me ear acrost the water, "It 's you that 's strong and brave and wise, and you would n't let him come to harm, *would* ye?" Me insides give way. I dropped on me knees by the flag-staff, feeling and feeling for just one drop of water. And I let out a yell. The planks was dry as a stone. "I 'm a dom fool!" says I; "a dom—dom fool!" I howled, breaking with tears, and slamming me head on the deck. Then two blue-breeches came running, and hauled me away to the prison abaft the sick-bay. And me next distinct recollection I never knowed.

WHEN I come to meself I was sitting on the capstan, and the ship lagging along between terra firma and Vancouver's Island. And Clarence O'Shay says to me, "I 'm detailed to watch that ye do no harm to the bo's'n's mate. For some says ye 've been bit by a water-dog and have hydrophobia; and some says ye 've gone crazy, and your intelligence loose and dangling inside of ye. And now," says he, "if you 're crazy, out with it and say so—between friends," says he; "and if not I 'll smoke me pipe."

I seen a ring around the paymaster's clerk auctioneering off the kit of a blue-jacket. "'T is another deserter," says O'Shay: "little Ellerson, that Peck

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says jumped off the bill-boards last night." And I seen little Ellerson's white uniform hanging up, with "D. D. E." on it in stencil. "'T is 'D. D.' he *is* now!" says I to meself, and I gulped and went below; and I sent O'Shay to buy what was left, which it cost me double for O'Shay's bidding so stubborn ag'in' himself.

In a week, by easy stops, the ship set down for a stay at Sitka, in a fine berth abreast the Ranch. Never a word did I say to old Peck all that time, for he kept the whites of his eyes to himself, and I seen his face change like a tree in the fall; for he loaded up with Victoria smuggle at Killisnoo, and was half seas over the rest of the time, yet taking but small content in his liquor. And him, that was celebrated for keeping his own company, would now be asking to go along with the boys, spearing salmon with 'em, and fishing for Siwash girls in the Ranch; and it looked that he was afraid to be alone with himself, as though he was scared he would say something to himself if he got the chance. One day I come acrost him behind his back in the copper-green Grecian church, bowing his head before the blessed Virgin, and he give a start as though stabbed, and coughed himself red for his foolishness; till by and by he took with a Siwash girl, and would be spending his time and wages on her, to the comment of the place. 'T was by this he twice overstayed his liberty, and was deprived for it, and went profaning to himself, with me eyes fastened on him trying to see him through. And not one of them days but I asked meself, could it be any way that little Ellerson had slipped the ship without coming aboard, and could he be still living? And not a night but I

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seen in me dreams the little girl standing on the pier, and asking me the same question—with me snuffling in me sleep till they says, "Sudd Lannigan is plumb in the day, but crazy by midnight." And I says to meself, Would one man murder another and live along and along, and never pay for it, by virtue of no one to prove it, with little Ellerson's body floating boot up to a soap-box, and so never observed? And me memory was gnawing me vitals, and the divil's own downheartedness stewing in me mind.

'T was the third time old Peck overstayed, and was deprived for it two days when he ached hard to meet his Siwash, that I seen a red petticoat waving in the afternoon from the little island next Japonski. And I seen a note carried ashore for him, and I says, something 's up. Then me fate took me in its two hands and held me aboard, though I had full leave to go where I pleased; and I stowed meself barefoot in the curl of the anchor, pretending to smoke to meself. The moon was darting zigzag among the clouds, with Oliver Peck eying it with hard looks from near by. I peeped over the side, and seen a canoe dropping down in the tide, held by a long line from another behind it. Then Peck laid down by the edge, and in a minute the dugout fouled the anchor-chain, and he rolled over the side and went down the chain. And when he turned round he seen another man with him, and it was me; and never a word had I spoke to him up to this since we left Seattle.

First he looked hard in the dark to make me out, and I grabbed the paddle and helped the tide, with him groping in the bottom for another, which there

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was none. And with one hand I hauled in the long line and fastened the end of it to the anchor-stone. The moon give a peep out, and says he suddenly, "'T is you, Sudd Lannigan!" And says I, "'T is you, Oliver Peck!"

"Where do we be going at?" says he.

"Divil I know," says I.

"It ain't your hand, then," says he, "that 's handling that paddle?"

"No," says I; "'t is the hand of God."

And says he, "What may that mean?"

"Divil I know," says I, paddling fast. I knowed he was staring at me in the dark, conniving as cool as his thoughts would let him.

"'T is a fine boat behind ye," says he, pointing to the excursion steamer from Puget Sound that lay at the pier. There was lights and music and dancing aboard of her, and a handsome sight she was; and I never turned me head.

"'T is strange you 're not aboard, dancing with the swells," says he, in a minute, with a sneer.

"Not so," says I; "for I loaned me claw-hammer to the Prince of Monte Carlo, and he never give it back."

"Ha, ha!" says Peck, laughing as though he was paid for it; "ye 've a fine stowage of wit, Lannigan, and it 's an accomplished man ye are!"

"True," says I, "for I can play 'Yankee Doodle' with one hand, and listen to 'God Save the Queen' with me other ear."

Then he held his mouth, and I kept paddling, saying never a word, but watching him take points on the island toward where we was headed, doubtful in

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the dark as to which one it was. And in ten minutes we breasted a jut of rock and pines, and heard a female voice hail us with "*Klahow yah!*" And says Peck:

"'T is right in here I 'll be going ashore, thank ye."

But I looked at him, and paddled steady, with never a word.

"Right in here, man!" says he, loud enough, and the wish to deal me one breaking in his voice.

But I kept her headed where she was, and the tide took us rushing by the point, and Oliver let out a swear.

"Look here, Lannigan," says he; "I 'm a mild-mannered man—I 'm a good-natured man; but there 's an end to trifling; and I 'll be going ashore on that island, and that 's all of it—see?" says he, with a strain of his voice.

But never a word I said. And his hand dropped on the gun'le, and he took again to conniving. The tide was galloping with the wind in its rear, and the dugout humming betwixt one island and another till the lights of Sitka disappeared, and by a few easy twists of her prow I lost him his bearings. The cedars grew black down to the sea, with their feet on the rocks that swashed with the breakers, and dense they was, like a wall that shut ye away from time. Peck leaned over and scanned the shore, where the water was a hundred feet sheer, and by moonlight I seen the sweat on his face and the look as of one counting his chances.

"'T is this island," says I, "where a man starved to death, near in plain sight of Sitka."

And he thought a minute, and says he: "And 't is

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here, I believe, that one man knocked the other from the dugout, and drownded him, and then went where he dom'd pleased."

"Indeed?" says I, paddling past it. "And which of the two was it?"

Which Peck made no reply; but I seen the inside of him as though he was glass, with the hate and the divil-craft surging in his heart like the bilge in a pump. I rounded a point, and turned up an arm of the sea, with the water laying dim for two miles beyond us, and the high mountains towering on top of us, like ye might have been ten thousand miles from the history of man. 'T was that still ye could hear the lapping of the water on the shore, though the wind was stopped by the point, and the place laid as smooth as a table. And when a loon flew over us, and give a shout with his fright, ye could hear the shout bounce back from the heart of the trees like the laughter of fifty jim*panzees*, till Oliver Peck coughed to cheer himself with the sound of his voice, and then was scared by its echo. And I steered up in the darkness twenty feet from the shore of the wilderness, till the trees shut out the moon and most of the sky.

"Ha, ha!" says Peck, of a sudden; "it 's a fine excursion we 're having! And so let it go at that, and no malice between us, for I never felt that gay as this minute! I could kill and eat two species of the human race! Show me a man that 's looking for trouble, will ye, Lannigan?"

And in the middle of it come a long howl of a she-bear that had lost her cub—a howl like the last despair.

"What 's that?" says he, gripping the gun'le.

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"Hark!" says I, dropping the paddle; "'t is the voice of a hand that 's laid hold of the bottom of us! Hark!" says I. And I leaned over the stern and dropped the anchor-stone without his knowing it, and the she-bear let out another howl, like 't was in the air forninst us.

"Paddle, man—paddle!" says Peck, with his tongue sticking to his lips. "This is no place—"

"Hark!" says I; "'t is a voice walking on the bottom! Listen, listen! 'T is little Ellerson. 'Ellerson, Ellerson, Ellerson!' it says. And then, 'Peck, Peck, Oliver Peck!' What does it mean?" says I.

"What 's that to me?" says Peck, like a cur in a corner. "What 's it to me? I 've no relations with him. He run off at Seattle; he took off to be deceiving the woman that promised to marry me. What are ye looking at *me* for? You 're crazy!"

And he seized the paddle and worked it like wild, sending the spray all over us. But we stayed stuck and fast, for we was anchored. And the howling of the she-bear—long, squealing, and divilish it was, like the ghost of a sick locomotive lost in the hills—the howling of it made him bend to it, to the broiling of his wits.

"What is it? What is it?" says he, with the beads on his brow.

"'T is Ellerson," says I. "'T is Ellerson saying he wants you. He says he wants the man that stove his head in and dropped him overboard to drown. What does it mean, man?" says I. "Who stove his head in? Was it you, ye white-livered snake?" says I, crawling at him. And I seen in the dark his hands

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go over his head, stripping the lanyard of his jack-knife. "Was it you that robbed him from the little girl standing on the pier?" says I. "He 's down at the bottom," says I, darting me thumb at the side; "and he says 't was you that took his life!"

"Go tell him 't is true, then!" says Peck, with a yell like a savage. "*That* for ye!" says he.

And he made a swing at me with the paddle, which it broke to splinters on me arm; and I give a duck, and the canoe overturned, and we dropped in the ice-water, hugging like brothers, with the sea absorbing the profanity of it, and then the top of the water rising above us in bubbles, and divil a sound. For we was forty feet below, with the sandy bottom roiling under our toes, while we carved with knives. And the business me and Peck had together was transacted then and there, for I rose up flabbergasting round the water a bit, and then laid hold of the bottom of the canoe, with the moon looking on it as peaceful as a garden, when I heard a small sound, and I looked down in the water, and I seen something bubbling up from below.

'T was his soul. And the moon went behind its clouds, and I set and thought.

DIVIL a word I said to meself till I seen the lights of Sitka. The dugout I righted; but the paddle had gone by the board, and 't was two hours of swimming with it ahead of me, in a dead calm, before the tide took a hand and let me steer with me feet, with the prow of the boat stuck high in the air. I seen the lights of Sitka reflected in the still water for four miles,—all the lights from the houses and the swell

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steamer, and the beacon on Baranoff Castle, and the light from the Mission of Christ,—and every one of them was pointing straight at me.

"Ye killed a man!" says they. "Look at ye—ye killed a man!"

"Aye," says I, "and small consolation. For it won't bring him back to her," says I. "She 's standing on the pier there, trimmed all in black, with a little white hanky slung in her belt. And she 's waving her hand to me; and I hear her speaking acrost the waters with a voice that breaks in two at each word, and, 'I 'm waiting, I 'm waiting!' she says; 'for it 's you that 's strong and brave and wise, and you *would n't* let him come to harm, *would* ye?'"

"And ye killed a man!" says the lights of Sitka.

"Yes, and I did," says I; "but it won't bring back little Ellerson, and she 'll never see him again till the coming of Judgment Day, and the Squaring of the Log."

CLARENCE O'SHAY was sitting for'ard, his feet embracing the jack-staff, and his pipe smoking in his teeth.

"Hair and hide of ye is wet to the skin," says he, as I laid me hand on her bow, with the moon white-shining as innocent as a maid. "And your bugle 's broke, and a bloody stab on the shoulder, and your pants one leg flapping in the wind. What 's the answer to it?"

"One of me legs mutinied," says I, "and I brung it aboard by force. And the Lord have mercy on me soul!"

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THE SPIRIT IN THE PIPE

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THE SPIRIT IN THE PIPE[1]

T was under the jack-staff he said these things, where the chain-rails meet and the stem sinks forward into the sea. The other men were sprawling barefoot on the deck, uttering fumes of navy plug to the Caribbean air. The lights at the signal-top hove slowly up and down against the stars.

Captain Silas Farragut Tarrant, U. S. N., owned a farm whereon was a barn wherein was a horse over which was a room where slept a little red Irishman—Clarence O'Shay—who loved both the pipe and the jug. Which I say no word ag'in' him, but one night the rum rose up in O'Shay and the coals dropped out of his pipe aflame on the straw of his bed, and the barn burnt down and the horse burnt up.

And Clarence O'Shay ran that fast away from the blaze that when the Captain had him up on charge of cruelty to a beast and arsony to a barn, Clarence come into court with an alibi; whereby the jury acquit him of arsony, by that he could n't have possibly been at the barn at the time; and fined him twenty dollars for cruelty to a beast because at such time he ought to have been at the barn.

[1] Reprinted from "The Cat and the Cherub" to complete this volume.

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And the Captain, as some say to make amends for the charge found false, or as others say to git O'Shay before an impudent cocked-hat court some day, instid of a civil one, got an enlistment for O'Shay as a second-class blue-jacket in the navy, and then straightway forgot of him. For the Captain was busy with trading of his hot-skotched farm and with having his rich wife's relations tickle the administration to git him a fine command.

And they fixed it to shove aside the one that should have it and give old Tarrant command of the battleship *Utah*, U. S. N., a brand-new grand machine of war of thirteen thousand ton by specification and fourteen thousand by fact, they say; she had a whole grove of funnels and military tops and wicked rifles pointing every what way. And the Captain come aboard of her and hoisted his pennant and declared she was in commission. But 't was three months before he had her ready to commit anything but lying forninst the pier.

Well, Clarence O'Shay, going his way, was sent to a big fat wooden receiving-ship—one of the war of 1812. That 's where I see him first. A square, short, squat, raw squab he was, with brick-colored fur and a jaw like the end of a box; and his shanks was twisted like andirons' legs. There was two or three hundred aboard, some recruits like him, and some with their hides tanned with experience, like me.

The officers took him and put him through the setting-up exercises day by day, till his shoulder-blades ground the skin of his back between him and the beads stood out on his brow, and they had him straightened;

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and they swore at him till they filled him with respect; and they taught him the evil end of a gun, and a notion of standing in line and counting fours and drilling with the rest of the tarriers; and I learned him how to swing to his hammick without kicking all four of his neighbors out of bed; and he got the gift of it in three months, and no credit to his stupidity.

And when we made part of a draft of fifty to fill out the *Utah* I took him under me wing and showed him how to smuggle his jug in the broad light of day past the searching sergeant of marines; and he took to that handily. But—oh, a real man-o'-war was a wildering bedazzlement to him! 'T was cross-eying to him! Such that he spent the deal of his time a-falling through coal-holes and hatches and ladderways, all by mistake,—that green he was,—and making friends everywhere in the bowels of the ship by it, with telling how once he had risked his life to save the Captain's horse from being dry-smoked.

So I took him a walk—to rub off his luster. I showed him the air-pumps and steam-pumps and hand-pumps and hydraulicky-pumps, and the fan-gear and tiller-gear and turning-gear; and condinsers and ice-makers and forty small engines here and there; with the winches and capstans and dynamos, and ash-hoists and shot-lifts and railways, and deck-plates and hand-wheels, and water-tight doors and holds and bottoms —me telling him what each and every one was for. And I expostulated to him how the green-flanged red-painted pipe overhead carried water, and the yellow-flanged blue pipe carried steam from the donkey, and the black-flanged gray pipe carried pressed air, and

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the red-flanged green pipe carried hydraulicky, and the speaking-tube pipe, painted yellow, took whispers all over the ship; and I showed him twenty flush hatches and started to tell him what each one was for. But O'Shay took to drink—saying that Heaven would forgive him.

And he nursed his jug till he emptied it—and that with all stragglers aboard and us lying in the lower harbor with every one sobering for a cruise! And he laid down on the tank-tops and sung:

> I 'd rather be right than Prisident!
> I 'd rather be boggled than right, bedad!
> *Pop!* goes the goozle!

and such profanity. And when I asked him to brace up his back and temper his voice to the regulations he said he was too busy with his joy. And I begged him and begged him for fear of court martial to straighten himself—but in vain; and when I spilled a bucket of brine on his head he said he was tight—tight—water-tight; and he asked if I was a blue bagpipe with red fringes—that obvious to his surroundings he was; and when I give him me boot in his ribs he laughed with joy and said 't was the pleasantest sensation in the history of man.

And so for fear of his court martial for smuggling his jug I lifted a manhole door and doubled him up and stuffed him down between the inner and outer skins of the ship—'t was a space not three feet in the clear; and I closed him in with a light to sleep by and screwed down the nuts on the door hard and fast. And the last command I heard him say was to lower

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no more blasted coffins there, but to leave him in the gentlemanly enjoyment of his tomb.

Well, I hauled off and forgot of him. For I see by the signs that the ship was to crawl away by moonlight, and me to serve me lick at the wheel at midnight. So I hove to and snored in me hammick between me favorite beams. And there was little Clarence, forty feet below, lying boxed up on the hard cement of her outside bottom, with her inner bottom for his sky, not two feet above his nose, and his feet ag'in' her vertical keel and his head bang up ag'in' another vertical plate called a longitudinal. For, ye see, a steel man-o'-war's shell is built on the cellulose system—as though ye should cut off one story of an empty honeycomb and bend it to the shape of a ship's bottom; and this was one of the cells which six of 'em made a compartment on the *Utah*. And ye could crawl from one of the six to another by virtue of holes in the upright plates; but beyond the six of the compartment ye could n't go without tearing through a twelve-pound plate, unless by the manhole door, which was screwed down tight above Clarence's head.

But O'Shay laid absorbing the flavor of his drink long past when old Tarrant come aboard from a champagne goozle, two thirds content with the universe and placing main reliance on his executive officer. The Captain ordered the *Utah* under way and tumbled into his bunk; and I heard the anchor hauling itself in over the windlass and the engines begin to go bump—bump, bump—bump, and I knew in me sleep we was off hunting for bad weather for a sea-test.

Then by and by, down below, O'Shay half waked in

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his sleep and inquired the time of day, and no one answered him—nothing but the stamping of the old double-harnessed elephants of engines two hundred feet abaft of him. And he laid on his back with the electric hand-light at his side, gazing up at the black manhole door, and by inches he partly come to himself—seeing above him and below him and all around him nothing but cold red iron walls and hearing the hard pounding of something not very far off, he did n't know what. And then a cold shiver chased itself all over him, for the thought of his being buried alive in an iron casket that way. "Begad," he says, "I remember now I died with only a boot in the ribs for me absolution," he says, "and, begad, I hear the tread of the twelve apostles plain as day!" And with that he drew in a breath like a wheezy cylinder and let out a howl to 'em for a stay of proceedings on his soul; but he might as well have been a rat a-drownding in the bilge; for the twelve apostles kept on treading, treading,—bump, bump,—never no farther and never no nearer—keeping step all the time as if they was walking in a circle round him, enjoying the fun of it. And he give a shriek and tried to jump up, but the iron skin struck his head and knocked him down, and he saw a hole that let into the next cell, and he crawled through it like a wild snake, dragging the light and leaving his wits and pieces of his breeches behind him, first praying and begging of the apostles, and then a-swearing at 'em, and then a-cursing of the Captain's horse for burning up and leaving him to be buried alive at sea, and all the time crawling and howling and cold-sweating till he crawled through the six cells

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back again to the first; and he laid down on his face and weep with distaste of it.

When his tears was spent he found that his hand was grasping of a pipe. And seeing it was painted yellow, O'Shay come to himself a bit, and remembered what 't was, for sure. For, ye see, the speaking-tube pipes in the *Utah* was led down through the inner bottom to keep 'em safe from splinters and shell; and this happened to be the one that went for'ard from the Captain's bunk—the same I showed him in the pilot-house, with telling him if he was captain he could speak with me through it. And O'Shay took out his grandfather's knife, with the file in it, and sawed away at the brass pipe to make a hole in it; and he recollected the flask in his pocket and took comfort by that; and he filed like a good one, and emptied the flask, and soon he had a hole in the pipe as big as a dollar; and he put his big mouth to it and says: "Pheeuw!" with a breath that blowed the brass filings a-jingling for yards abaft. And the automatic mouthpiece aft in the Captain's cabin—'t was nigh on to midnight—and the same like mouthpiece for'ard in the pilot-house, both whistled to wake the dead. For, ye see, Clarence, being in the middle, was establishing himself with both ends of it—though he had no thoughts but of me. And the quartermaster's mate in the pilot-house jumped to the mouthpiece and whispered: "Yessir." And in the cabin old Tarrant, waked up from his champagne doze by the hiss in his ear, took up the mouthpiece that hung by a flexible tube from the sheathing, and says with impatience: "Well, sir?" Which neither of 'em heard the other;

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but O'Shay, down below, hearing their voices associating together, shouts: "Come and unlock me, ye blasted idiot!" And the quartermaster's mate, thinking old Tarrant was locked in his state-room, says: "Yessir!" and charged horse and foot along the deck toward the cabins. And old Tarrant, at hearing such marvelous insubordination shouted to him by some one at the other end of the tube, shot up from his bunk like a mortar. "Ye 're under arrest!" says he, through the mouthpiece. "Go tell the master-at-arms to lock ye up!" says he. And O'Shay, thinking it was me, shook his fist at the hole in the pipe, and bawls in old Tarrant's ear: "Under arrest, is it? I 'm ten miles under dry land!" says he. "Come lemme out—or I 'll make a corpse of ye that can't walk the streets of heaven in decency!" And with hearing that blasphemy the Captain leapt over and pushed a bell, and his Scandinavian blockhead of a private-of-marines-orderly come in. "Arrest that man in the pilot-house, ye numskull!" orders the Captain.

And the private-orderly-numskull lit out for the pilot-house, running to split his tight blue robin's-egg breeches; and he meets the quartermaster's mate running and asking: "What 's the matter with the skipper?" and says the orderly: "What 's the matter at the pilot-house?" and they both went on without answering each other. And the mate burst into the Captain's state-room, saying eagerly: "Did ye want help, sir?" "Help, ye fool!" roars the Captain. "Who said it? Do I want help to put on me trousers? You 're under arrest, too, sir! Go tell the orderly to arrest ye despite yer resistance!" he says,

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or something like it. "I 'll see if there 's mutiny aboard this craft," says old Tarrant, putting his feet into the sleeves of his dress-coat by mistake, and howling in a voice to wake the dead and half the ward-room officers: "Call the officer of the deck! Pilot-house there," he says through the mouthpiece, leaning over his bunk, "send aft the officer of the deck!" And O'Shay, down below, thinking it was me, bellers back: "I 'll send ye aft the twist of me thumb in yer eye," he says; "come down and lemme out or I 'll come up and make a horse-meat sausage of ye!" And about that time I began to hear 'em in extraordinary expeditions on deck, and the orderly hollerin' to split himself, and the master-at-arms running steeple-chases, and I says to meself it 's time to spill.

And from the hatchway I noticed there was no officer on the bridge, so I reconnoitered the man at the wheel —the one I come up to be standing by to relieve. "The matter?" says he, shifting his quid and staring straight on in her course—'t was a bright moonlight night, ten miles off Sandy Hook. "There 's the divil to pay and no pitch hot," he says. "Just listen to the old man talking in his drink through the voice-pipe!" And I took the mouthpiece and heard a voice saying: "I warn ye; if me soul leaves me body I 'll come up at ye through the pipe, I will! I 'll stick yer heart that full of holes as a strawberry!" he says. "Me naked spirit 'll sit on yer ear," he says, "like a barnacle on a clam—talking to ye till the end of time!" he says, "and longer, begad!"

And me heart moved two inches to one side, for I knowed 't was O'Shay that was bringing the whole

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ship's company to its feet with the belief that old Tarrant had gone daft with his drink. I could hear manding and countermanding from stem to stern of her. With that I grabbed a gallon of valve-oil from the floor of the pilot-house and dumped it quick down the pipe, and polished off the mouthpiece with me sleeve. And I tumbled below, for I had but five minutes to git O'Shay and save his neck from court martial; and I knew the oil would only stop him till he could spit it out and draw his breath. For luck there was no one by when I unfastened him. "Hello, Clarence," says I. "What are ye here for?" "For me health, ye baboon!" says he, spitting oil from his teeth. And at first he showed fight; but I hauled him out by the collar of his neck, and sat him down hard once or twice on the tank-tops to show him his legs was too stiff for it, and I whispered to him of the officers running around crazy to find him, with their threats of keel-hauling him. And I carried him up the ladder on me back and planted him on deck with care.

Along come a young surgeon looking for what he could find, and says he: "What ails this man?" "Nothing, sir," says I; "he 's fallen down two hatchways and disturbed his innards, as appears from his mouth, sir," which was still bubbling oil. And the surgeon says: "Dump him into the sick-bay." Which I did, giving him a pointer to keep mum with his voice about smuggling his jug, and advising him to git all the sleep he could. "For I hear," I says, "ye 're to be hanged at the signal-arm at sunrise."

And when I come for me trick at the wheel, on the

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bridge I see the pilot-house full of ward-room officers, and they had the quartermaster's mate and the man whose relief I was and the wooden-head Scandinavian orderly, questioning all three of 'em about what they had said; but the Captain they had soothed back to bed. And they could figure no relationship with the statements of them three and what the Captain had said. I heard 'em send for the Regulations, and I knowed they was considering the steps to be taken when a captain loses his command by virtue of his vice of intemperance, for they thought he had drillium trimmins. And from what I heard I see 't was the intention to watch him in the morning and take action according to his condition; and so they dispersed. And when me trick was done at four o'clock in the morning I lost no time in dropping below to make a clumsy job of repairing the voice-pipe, at the risk of imminent discovery.

'T was four bells of the morning before I had finished it. I says to meself, I 'll go and be shining brass knobs in the cabin, in place of O'Shay, and hear what is said. And the first thing old Tarrant remarks when he opens the door was: "Go tell the officer of the deck to send aft all those men I placed under arrest last night at midnight." Which I did, and the officer hummed and hawed and says: "How does the Captain look this morning?" "How does he look?" says I; "he looks like he had bad sleep last night, sir," I says, "and maybe misleading dreams, with no irreverence to him, sir."

And the officer says: "Hum; go tell him he was mistaken. He placed no man under arrest last

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night." And when I told old Tarrant that, he did n't fly off his handle, but looked a bit dazed to himself. "'T was the night before," he says to himself,—"yes. Never mind; 't was the night before." And he come with false leisure for'ard, and see the quartermaster's mate standing on one leg ag'in' the tompion of old ten-inch, smoking of his pipe to beat the stack of a soft-burning Britisher.

"Was it last night," says the Captain, "I had you aft at midnight?" he says, a bit dubious. "*Me*, sir?" says the mate, with his eyebrows flying up under his hat. "No, sir, 't was n't me, sir; nor any night, sir." And old Tarrant walked aft again. And 't was the last word any one hear of it, or of anything that had occcurred that night. But during that cruise the color of old Tarrant's beak changed from a flaming Turkey red to a decent claret and water; and 't was plain he thought he had the drillium dreams.

Well, I went for'ard and shook O'Shay to wake him. "Beware me naked spirit!" he mutters, half obvious of himself. "Wake up, Clarence," says I, bringing him to his senses. "Are ye better this morning, me boy? 'T is twenty-four hours ye laid in a stupor calling out names to beat the divil. Ye 've had a bad case of drillium trimmins, me lad. 'T is a special dispensation ye 're living this day!"

"Is that all of it?" says Clarence, rolling of his eyes with relief. "Thank Heaven!" he says. "I dreamed I was being shipped in a tin can to the King of the Man-Eating Isles!"

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THE YELLOW BURGEE

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THE YELLOW BURGEE

HIS was a dream I had. There was me and Clarence O'Shay; and Fergus of Oregon; and Williams the nigger; and Bo's'n Nutt of Newburyport, so called, though no bo's'n at all; and Brawney Thompson, the new recruit; and we was the crew of her tops—all bottled with fight, and guessing what next, with the department tight as a drum with information, for yet having none to impart. By the hot twilight of the Keys the clot of us would rally under the jackstaff for general expansion and repartee, till we was the gist of society. Then Bo's'n Nutt would play rubber with the truth of his troubles in being a boy in Newburyport, and me to draw the giant's bow of me doings in China; then Clarence would dance a solemn sand-dance with his feet, and Fergus of Oregon would speak: "Flap-doodle, flap-doodle—fall in for your boodle!"—till at last the nigger with his infant banjo, and Brawney Thompson with his beautiful nasal voice, would sing music to words spliced by Brawney himself while laying awake to think of his Madeleine, like:

The first I knew I had me tears, I found me eyes afloat,
To see the Stars and Stripes at Guan-ta-*na*-mo;
The first I knew I had me heart, I found it in me throat,
To see the Stars and Stripes at Guan-ta-*na*-mo,

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which would start with the stamping of feet, and end with silence; for all the rhymes that Brawney wrote would finish sad.

One morning we hove up in the middle of the night, and bid adieu without saying good-by; and our hopes of gitting something for our ammunition was certified by the invent of a stranger. He wore knee-breeches and a Walter Raleigh beard; and he stops at the gang-boards, with his nose smelling at the rifle of the marine.

"Who the divil do ye wish to see, sir?" says the guard, or such words.

The knee-breeches gives a shirk of the eyebrows, and waves at the rifle to abolish it.

"Tell 'em I 've came," says he,—"and they don't seem to expect me!" he says, in surprise. "Call the captain and his officers," says he, granting the privilege with grace.

"What name, sir?" says the marine, polite as a dancing-master, and aching to push him in the countenance with his piece.

"What name!" says the knee-breeches. "Ain't me face been printed often enough, with me biography? Don't ye read? I 'm Kuhlamar," says he, with a pause to let it sink home,—"Kuhlamar, the War Critic of the 'Daily Flash,'" says he, staring at the rifle, and ignoring the cold eye in the white breeches behind it. "I never met such a crazy divil at the door of the Pope!" says he.

And says the marine, stiff as St. Peter:

"Tell the deck one of them reporters—"

"Reporters!" says the knee-breeches. "What

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brand of laughing-stock are ye? Don't ye know I 'm the Special Envoy of the 'Daily Flash'?"

So by letters of introduction and command he saddled himself on the crowded ward-room mess, and begun roostering up and down the quarter-deck. I never hear what happened; but after the first meal I see the War Critic smoking to himself, with the officers casting eyes and nodding in general opinion; and he never seen anything but the sea before him. And the same thereafter—him total oblivious, but writing down notes of his thoughts disfavorable. Brawney and me and Clarence lit out for the upper top on a call for quarters. 'T was command of silence, with everything trained on an innocent bark on the bow, and all hands mumbling "Too much drill," when a snicker arose, and with it the War Critic. There was two revolvers slung to his waist, with ammunition to take Gibraltar; and a spy-glass, a canteen of booze, and a roll of bunting tied to him, along with a photograph-box; and his coat was a patchwork of pockets, with maps and pads, and ink-druling pencils, and yeller glasses to give color to the Spanish war. The red cross was sewed to both sleeves, and his big white helmet made him look like a snail a-dangling of its in'ards.

"'T is only a drill," says he, through his spy-glass, as kind as your grandfather. "And ye need n't fear any fighting, for I have a letter from me friends at court."

"Silence, there!" yells up Bo's'n Nutt. The War Critic give him the piteous smile, and killed time by taking the bo's'n with his photograph-box. By and by he strolled with all toggery through the living-

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space; and they stared before him, and cat-called behind him; but he turned, and says not to be scared of him, and he conversed as indulgent as with lunatics. He had private information as to her destination, he says,—and they all crowded to the bait,—but 't was not good policy to tell, he says, at the present time. But, from his experience, which extended from Chile to China, by way of Turkey, he would say that the war would be but a naval parade, with a little bluffing at long range, and a killing or two. It grieved him sore, for fighting was his joy. Anyway, he says, his career was the most interesting he ever hear of, and his talents the most extraordinary. 'T was always him first in with the news, which was why all them that ranked as but plain correspondents was down on him.

'T was him that first noticed the Johnstown flood; and he jumped aboard of it with a hen-coop, to have the front seat and arrive at the telegraph. And he was the only one living that had interviewed the Czar —the old Czar watching with two cocked revolvers to see if he slipped a cog in his etiquette. And he was the same that advised with the King of Greece for exterminating the Turks; but the King got grouty, and, bedad, the War Critic brought over the Turks to knock him into a pint-pot. But he says he was tired of herding with them kings and queens; for they was a stuck-up lot, he says, with their noses always in your pedigree; but 't was superior to laying at Washington, and driving a string of congressmen with the brand of the "Flash." The only decent life was making war; and he was planting the mines for a general conflict of the powers, which, he says, the world needed

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to draw its bad blood. And by the end of his two hours' ego-biography there was none left but Brawney Thompson, that stood sizing him up, and Bo's'n Nutt, that was aching to tell a lie of his own, but could n't git the wedge in. The War Critic fastens on Brawney, and commences to educate him, from telling him how to wear a beard to how inferior he was to the blue-jackets of Europe. The navy was bad enough, says he, but the regular army on parade would make the Emperor of Germany fall off his horse. And he says he always passed himself for an Austrian abroad, for shame of the United States being so raw in the particulars of formality.

"For I see your intelligence," says the War Critic, "and by your conversation more of a gentleman than them officers aft."

And Brawney says, "Thank ye," which was the first he had opened his mouth.

"So it may occur I need ye," says the War Critic, dropping his tone. "The captain and his staff conspires to beat me out of sending the news; but the poor divils don't know what it is to go up ag'in' the 'Daily Flash'; for ye can lay to it, I 'm the big thing aboard this craft. 'T is all right to be singing songs of the star-spangled rag, but the 'Daily Flash' will be doing politics when one-legged patriots is starving on ten-dollar pensions; and ye can think of that. I 'll throw up me hat with the next, and yell 'Hail, Columbia!'" says he; "but the 'Daily Flash' will give the people the news, if it scuttles the Ship of State to git it; and if the fact is worth money to ye, I may see ye again," says he, walking off.

"Eh? What?" says Brawney, staring after him.

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"The blackguard!" says Brawney, coming to himself. "And he called the flag a rag—and I never pulled out his Austrian beard; and what will me Madeleine say to that?"

"'T was the best thing ye never did," says I, "and the future will prove it."

We made Cape Haitien without adventures, and the launch was called away for despatches. The War Critic saunters down, and sets himself in the stern-sheets, like the admiral of all he surveyed.

"Ye 'll have to go back on board, sir," says little Ensign Charlie.

"What for?" says the War Critic. "Is the launch disabled?"

"No, sir," says Charlie; "'t is because ye can't go ashore."

"I 'll look into that!" says the War Critic, climbing the ladder. "Ye can hold the launch till I confer with the captain," says he.

"Cast off!" says Charlie; and the launch rolled away to town. We waited for her long in the dark, me and Brawney chewing tobacco in the eyes of the ship, and expeculating on what was the chances of meeting the foe. Then for the first time since the launch departed the War Critic appeared, and motioned silent for Brawney to draw to one side. They fumbled together in the dark without speaking audible, and I was glad to see 'em break away without Brawney smashing him for having miscalled the flag. The War Critic wandered away in the gloom, and Brawney drags me double-quick to a den in the torpedo-flat.

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"He gimme ten dollars and a tin can," says Brawney. "He says I must drop the can to the bumboat with the sail."

"And—?" says I.

"I dropped the can," says Brawney. "But first I drew the charge. Listen to it, directed to one at Cape Haitien:

"I am able to announce exclusively that our destination, which for strategic reasons of greatest importance government has so far succeeded in concealing, is Isle of Pines. As soon as this fact is known, change of destination will become necessary, that enemy may not profit by disclosure. Influence of 'Flash's' War Critic is being thrown toward early crushing of enemy in these waters, at whatever sacrifice. 'Flash's' Special Envoy will fly yellow burgee of 'Daily Flash' when ship goes into action; and flag of 'Flash' will never be taken down.

"Special to Mulliraw: Flag is no fake. Shall fly it long enough for snap shot in confusion of some prize-capture. Try hot oven on this sea-mule and his officers: they have thrown me down everywhere. K."

In ten minutes Brawney had red-taped himself to Old Handsome in his cabin.

"Hm!" says the Old Man, tapping his desk, "and what did ye intend with the ten dollars?"

"'T was cross-purpose," says Brawney—"to send it to me Madeleine, or give it to the Red Cross, or light me pipe with it."

The Old Man went on tapping.

"But," says Brawney, "we not being yet married,—and such dirty money as that,—why, what would me Madeleine think? And maybe the Red Cross—or else—" says he, stammering.

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"This money," says the Old Man, handing back the bill, "is from the 'Daily Flash.' It came cent by cent from the dirty palms of discivilization, paying tribute to the king of the garbage-heap," says he—or such words. "There 's plenty of honest money over there," says he, pointing to the United States. "The Red Cross don't have to draw on the maggots of license and corruption," says he—or such words. "There 's five ships of the enemy in these waters, and we 've got to git past 'em. This man would deliver us all to Davy Jones for the sake of glorifying himself in his newspaper. And what was it he called the flag?"

"By St. Peter-in-the-Pilot-house!" exclaims Brawney, at the thought of it. In the scratch of a match ye could smell the ten dollars in his palm, consuming in flames.

The Old Man watched the ashes being poured into Brawney's cap; then he pulled out a new ten from his own salary.

"Send that to your Madeleine," says he, "and tell her, as far as this ship has its keel, I know a good man."

"Thank ye, sir—yes, sir; beg pardon, sir!" says Brawney, with the new bill in his hand; "but, anyway, me Madeleine has dough of her own; and, anyway, the money is only come by virtue of a d—d squid aboard that would spit ink on the flag; and I think it would twice more please the taste of me Madeleine to take it back for the Red Cross, sir!"

Bo's'n Nutt says he see the same thing took place in Newburyport, when he was a boy; but it 's a lie.

We was a grumbling lot. Drill and clear and jug-

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gle with dummy loads till I thought I would forgit me brain! The Old Man had reinforced the upper top, and mounted a three-pounder, being special for secondary battery; and he had placed behind it the eye of Clarence O'Shay, such that Clarence would grin in his sleep, and would sit at the breech by the hour, shaking insults at the sky-line. But never a bull-rag showed up. We passed to the north of Porto Rico, and begun sliding down the Antilles, till it seemed we had fooled the enemy's squadron, with no chance of excitement more; and Brawney mumbled we was nothing but a picnic for a news-scavenger. The four niggers would clump apart, in disgrace for preserving good nature. Every false alarm, by day or night, the War Critic would haul himself to the top in all his baggage; for he told Brawney the top was the softest place in case of surprise, and him too high-salaried a man to be risking his skin unnecessary. On deck he treated us shy for a while after Cape Haitien; but at length he come with a bunch of cigars from his give-away box. Did one of us ever meet with adventures? says he; and what made us enlist at such jobs?

'T was the speech of his congressman that made him enlist, says Brawney—which 't was thought of so highly that Congress had it printed and sent free through the mails. The speech says, who was it, with none dependent, and having his manhood, that would sit home in his slippers, with a lot of bull-ragging fandangos pulling at the tail of the eagle? And Brawney says that hit him, and he give up an eighty-dollar job. The War Critic let out a laugh.

"'T was me that wrote it for him," says he; "for

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your congressman was fuddled as a snake in alcohol. 'T was considered the best he ever made, and he had it printed at his own expense. 'T is a cheap little rascal, your congressman; ye can buy him for ten dollars or more: but a man that won't stay bought," says the War Critic, with virtuous indignation, "I have no use for!"

Brawney threw the cigar over his head, and walked off. I heard him mumbling over it in the middle of the night, when, by the regulations, he ought to be sleeping.

"And she and me setting up to finish it!" says he; "and crying, and patting me on the shoulder!"

He went on berating to himself, with the whole of us swaying in the gloom, and having bad dreams of peace declared, like two hundred cods in a cockpit.

"Here we are walking on the water," says he, "at chambermaids' wages, for the joy of defending the finest flag afloat, when along comes this gromet-mouthed gas-vat to foul our course, and bringing the powers of Congress behind him! And he called it a rag to me face!" says he, beating the rivets overhead.

I heard five bells. The nigger and Bo's'n Nutt competed with snores like twins. The night was escaping without drill.

"Is the whole government rotten, and the universe?" says Brawney; "and the President's message wrote by some husky reporter that loafs at the White House gate? And me leaving me Madeleine!" And he pulls out a photograph, and tries to see it.

"Don't git so honest ye think you 're the only one," says I.

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"Well, there 's me Madeleine that 's square," says Brawney; "ye can lay to that. And Father Moore I will swear to, though no Catholic; and, bedad, you and Old Handsome would kick the divil, if he come with absolution. But the rest of mankind, I mistrust, would have took the ten dollars; and some of them senators, too."

"Have ye been reading the 'Flash'?" says I. "And the world but a magazine of crime, and the flag but for fools, by inference?"

"'T is the finest flag since God made bunting!" says Brawney. "And—" says he.

We all heeled over, caused by the helm brought hard to port. By an instinct of hope, ten others and Bo's'n Nutt and me slid out barefoot, and ducked for the hatch.

The sea was a lavender Japanee crape; a pasty fog picked its skirts across us, with the moon shining through like a paper screen. We lumbered the bit of a swell like a blind blue dripping shape of lead for our war-paint, with our funnels daubing ag'in' the sky; and the little six-pounders sniffed over the berthings, and the big rifles stared with their thoughts nine miles in space. She come at a gathering gait; two brown ribbons streamed behind, singing a song of sixpence to a sea that curled and kissed her lines in admiration. Her pilot-house rushed in a point like an arrow, as if she would say: "I 'm a round nine thousand tons of steel, and I ride by the quest of freedom."

Nutt asked me, and I asked Nutt. All we see was the Old Man making for the bridge. Clarence was

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gazing ahead from the jack-staff, in his little square coat. I give me double cough. Clarence stuck out a thumb to the waters, and I see a faint line of bubbles—the wake of a steamer, not five minutes old.

"Are ye seasick?" says the War Critic, over me shoulder. "What is it up?" says he, seeing two orderlies dash for below. "What did ye see?" says he, leaning with haste into Clarence's ear.

"Keep that reporter abaft the davits!" says a dark voice.

"Don't git excited!" worries the War Critic, with Brawney Thompson helping his retreat. "'Reporter'! I 'll black-list these jumping-jacks!" says he to me.

But I see a torrent of silent legs up-pouring. "Clear ship!" says I to meself. "Has the Old Man found his quarry?" says I, me heart on a jig. I swallowed meself in the mêlée.

"Pleasant to see something doing," the War Critic was observing, taking the ladder for the upper deck. A half-dozen stokers, risking their hides to see what was up before they dropped down to the boiler-hell, come flying, and shouldered him up like a hod of plaster. The coil of a boat-fall lowered away, and carried his props from under him. Somebody harpooned him in the back with a loose hatch-batten, and a crew of bare-breasted spirits snatched him aft in the bight of a length of hose. In the dark, the gallop of men and marines, landsmen and idlers, tooth and nail, like a rally of ants, bedazzled his wits. He slid for home base astride of a stream from a two-inch nozle, and he chased himself up the mast in the quiet of "all

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divisions heard from." He met Brawney Thompson sliding down from the peak with a smile.

"The finest, freest war-ribbon that ever topped God's green!" says Brawney, looking back. "And *me* a-setting ye there, at dawn on this day of our Lord that may God send the enemy! What would me Madeleine say to that?"

"Silence!" went everywhere.

"I had hopes," whispers the War Critic; "but 't is only another sham."

Clarence set by the breech of his piece, with his eyes in the water. The bubbles had grown to suds.

"I seen the corn-paper stumps of their cigarettes!" whispers Clarence.

But the crews of the rapid-fires on deck had seen no suds; and worse in the turrets. 'T was plain cold feet and wet gratings and vituperation inside, with little more on but trousers. "Have over, and back to our snores!" they muttered; but there they stood, with their toes turned up. The boilers begun to growl. 'T was one bell.

"Don't strike that bell!" says a sudden voice.

"Eh?" says the six-pounders, scared at their rising hopes.

We took up another two knots to the hour; and ye could tell that below they was shoving the soot to beat the divil with a new batch of souls, and the oilers and water-tenders crawling like bugs in the belly of a whale.

"Well, I suppose them fellers at the small guns on deck would git the brunt of it," says the War Critic.

"Silence!" says Bo's'n Nutt, from beneath.

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"Silence!" says I, under breath, "for we 're attending a wake."

Which the War Critic put in his book; for the color of day was bleaching the mist that shrouded us, and the situation plain to all.

"'T will turn out a Portegee!" mumbles Clarence, berating Providence. "'T is always so when we git our mouths puckered!"

"It might be a prize," says the War Critic, lighting his cigar, in the face of the regulations, "and money coming to ye. They would owe me some, too; for 't was action of mine that throwed us here," says he, smiling at his thoughts.

"This sea-sheriff business can go to the divil," says Brawney. "I 'm looking for a prize what thinks it can shoot target with Yankee Doodle."

"'T will be but a 'Scotch man-o'-war' full of greasers!" says Clarence, doleful; "and me grandmother calling me a dove!"

I give a snort. Had the wind come astern of the funnels? Divil a bit; but I smelt smoke with the fog. Was it true, and the craft ahead had crossed our bow?

"What have ye?" says Clarence. "Make no noses at me!" says he, in his evil mood.

"Smoke in the wind!" I bellered, believing me nostrils.

"In the wind?" says the voice-pipe.

"In the wind, sir!" says I.

The War Critic laid down his roll of bunting—the yeller burgee of the "Daily Flash." I see through me glass the mist take shape, then dissolve.

"Military top, sir!" I bawled. "Two points for'ard the beam; no ship of ours, sir!"

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Approbations rose from the deck in murmurs. "There was two of them, then," says every one, "for the wake of the other was straight and fresh." The air was thick with prayers that it might not be friends.

"Two of 'em!" says the War Critic. "And us stumbling between 'em, with colors set! Shout the warning!" says he.

We swung away to put the two in the fog to port of us, and the starboard sections groaned.

"The Old Man finds his senses," says the War Critic. "He'll be away and from sight, and they never guess!"

But we took up our course again. The breeze waked up and rubbed the eyes of the morning, as Brawney says; and the fog swept clear for a thousand yards, then for another thousand; and then, like throwed on stereoptican, it showed us a big armored cruiser, with our broadside trained on it like needles on the pole. She was asleep, with no colors shown; and your toes clenched in your boots.

"Stick up your rag!" says Clarence, shaking his fist; for the marks of the breed stood out on every stitch of her. "Have ye nothing but hind legs, ye bull-ragging beast?" says he.

'T was as though she heard, for she let out a scream like a nightmare; and our steam siren yelled for watertight doors.

"What?" says the War Critic. "Hear the answering toots in the fog! Don't he know 't is the first art of war not to fight with superior force?"

"Ship ahoy! What ship is that?" says the Old Man, speaking across her bows through our for'ard five-inch rifle. They was flying up and down her decks like rats, and she edged away toward the fog.

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"Ship ahoy, there! What ship is that?" roars the Old Man, tapping a hole through the fandango's funnel.

I see the flag of the enemy break from her peak, and a dozen juts of smoke from her side. A howl of delight arose to me ears, and the sea splashed up like a school of whales. Our eights and half our fives was up and away with the bugle-blast, with the six-pounders barking at their heels; and the sun jumped out of the night, with its chin on the sky-line, to see what the divil was doing. It see the moon as pale as a shirt, and the fog skedaddling with its petticoats up, and hell's tune playing 'twixt two little specks at sea, with me and Brawney and Clarence and the War Critic hung in a bowl in the sky. Clarence was cursing with the finest freedom ye ever hear, for he was out of range. The War Critic stood hold of the mast, biting his teeth, and his eyes in a stare. Brawney stood ready to serve, with a gaze and a smile; and he looked up at the flag standing sharp to the breeze, where he put it, and he laughed and slapped his thigh. Never such joy I 've known in the forty years since me mother's lap. Natural lust of destruction flying loose in me heart; bottled and corked essence of peace-drill and peace-subordination, bedad, and peace-idleness of twenty years' cruising, dropped, with a rifle-crack, like a cangue from off me neck. The sides of me brain worked separate together. "Let it exude," says the one, "free!—free 's a balloon!" And the other howled:

"Gunboat coming out of the fog, sir—enemy's flag!"

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The Old Man and his mate stood like the rear of an observation-car, roaring remarks in each other's ears. The hot light of day rode the bare backs along the berthing till each man steamed like a horse on ice. We was easing the gap between us and the foe, and her consort hovering down to the region of six-inch remonstrance, and landing by luck with a shell through our armor-belt that sent the carpenter sprinting for the protective deck with nine kinds of patches. A six-pounder went through me hair, I thought; and the War Critic felt it, and kneeled down to the trap, staring at the deck fifty feet below. But he got up again, and jammed his helmet over his eyes.

"The coal-bunkers was the place to be," he says to himself.

"Nineteen hundred yards!" yells Fergus of Oregon, his head through the trap.

Clarence stopped his profanity. By the holy powers, I see the two corners of his mouth from the back of his head, and he had no nerves. He settled as quick to the breech of his piece as a squalling baby put to the breast, and he took aim like wiping the rim of your glass with a doily before ye swig your beer; and we never heard no more from him but the smell of saltpeter. The air whistled like a typhoon, and there was Fergus, still with his head and shoulders through, his chin on his breast, like thinking.

"My God!" says the War Critic, drawing away from Fergus.

We all howled, for we see the gunboat doubled up with an eight-inch shell in her brain, and not knowing where to go. The big fandango landed in our for'ard

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torpedo-flat, and knocked a Whitehead into watch. works, and blowed an ensign off the navy-register.

"She 's on fire in the quarters, sir!" I yelled with one eye. With the other I seen 'em discumbering Fergus from the trap. He had n't no legs. The War Critic gazed at him dumb, the photograph-box askew on his back. A shower of hot commas exploded under my jaw.

"Bedad, they 're loading with barbed-wire fence!" says Brawney, observing the flesh-cuts on him and me; "and they 've tore out a gap in the list of junior grade in the after-turret; and there 's White Olsen keeled over and bit a piece from an officer's shoe."

"Enemy's stern caved in by a shell, sir! Enemy's squadron approaching ahead—three ships!" says I.

Our port anchor-davit arose off the deck at the news, and jumped into the sea, with a solid shot behind; and I thought the War Critic would dive after it.

"Look here; ain't we got enough?" says he, clutching Clarence's shoulder with sharp finger-nails. But Clarence thought it was a wound, and would pay no attention. "Man, man," says the War Critic, "leave 'em alone—leave 'em alone!"

The big fandango was winded a bit, or her tail-feathers broke, for she slowed and swung. The Old Man smiled. We started all steam to cross her bow —to run 'tween her and her mate, for the love of raking her fore and aft, though the two of 'em snatched us bald. "There 's three fresh craft a-vomiting smoke behind," says I. "The excitement of battle is about to begin," says I, freeing me face of nose-bleed; and I laughed such a divil's own joy of a

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laugh as ye can't brew the liquor to bring. A hot shot went between Clarence and his elbow.

"Did ye find me card beneath your hammick door?" yells Clarence, like a row in a tenement. "Take that, ye yeller baboons!"

"I 'll give ye a hundred dollars to jam your breech; they must leave us alone!" says the War Critic, fanning the air with a hand-load of bills for the second time in Clarence's face. Clarence took the wad, and fed it into the breech of his piece; and the next five shots cost the "Daily Flash" twenty dollars apiece; and Clarence went right on.

So we shot the rapids, starboard and port, great guns and small, Bo's'n Nutt and Clarence O'Shay, at nineteen knots for the other world. I says good-by to meself. I says, "Some angel will be walking ye by the ear in a minute, and there 's an awkward thing or two he 'll be asking ye about. What?" says I. "Are we afloat? That 's the nigger down there with his leg broke; and Clarence's scalp has a piece sticking up like the door of a spider; and the War Critic has a vaccination on his arm, but too busy counting his sins to know it; and, bedad, we 're afloat!"

"Git away!" says Clarence, straining to train the three-pounder astern.

There come a yell from the lower top. A gasp of joy, and some stripes of red passed over me eyes. 'T was the colors, brought down by the breaking of the block; and 't was the War Critic clutching it, hauling it in like the divil after your soul.

"We 've struck! We 've saved our skins!" he says, falling on the flag to hide it.

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Did ye ever hear Yankee Doodle roar when a tuft of his feathers was pulled? I heard a shout as big as North America. Me and Clarence and the bloody crew of Bo's'n Nutt collided in a bunch; but we was all behind. The War Critic laid jerking in the ruins of his tackle. 'T was Brawney Thompson that shinned the bare pole, with the bunting in his teeth, and a thousand yells to boost him. A flight of flying iron went whistling by, and for an answer the forty-five stars stood stiff to the breeze. Brawney gripped the pole. He turned his face and looked down strange in me eye, and me and Clarence went up after him. We all slid back in a heap, and we set Brawney ag'in' the mast, and tore his shirt apart, his head rolling like an apple on its stem. The little sky-terrier begun barking again in the hands of a new detail—six of us crammed in a space fit for three; and I could n't hear what Brawney was trying to tell. The seconds went by in a daze, and we could n't see nothing to do. Then the bugle blowed, and a howling din of silence beat on your brain to break your heart. I put me ear to Brawney's mouth; but all I hear was the tinkle of the nigger with his broken leg, in the top below, and his infant banjo, to the tune:

> The first I knew I had me heart, I found it in me throat,
> To see the Stars and Stripes at Guan-ta-*na*-mo.

"I 'll give ten dollars for a flask of liquor!" says the War Critic. "I 've got to git down from here, somehow!" says he.

We heard a boom away astern. Brawney opened his eyes.

"Commenced again?" says he.

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"The fandango has blowed up her small-arms magazine, I judge," says I; "and her mates galloping to hold her head out of water."

"Fandango blowed up!" says Brawney, with the end of a smile. "Lemme see—lemme see! Ah," he says, "your glass is all fog! I can't see a blank thing! But that 's the flag!" he says, his head reeling back. "Well, it ain't no rag, is it? And only a minute ago —and what would me Madeleine say to that?"

Then he did n't speak no more; and 't was the first time I ever see Clarence afraid.

We laid Brawney down on a six-pounder grating, wrapped in a flag, with the rest. The Old Man tightened his lips to look at him. The War Critic, in the wreck of his helmet, come out of the mast, hanging to what he could, gazing at the seams in the deck.

"Here 's a bit of bunting found in the top, sir," says the mate to the Old Man; and he unrolls the yeller burgee of the "Daily Flash."

"I want to see you, sir!" says the Old Man, fixed on the War Critic like two eight-inch guns.

The War Critic straightened himself a bit, and raised his head. There was two hundred half-naked men facing him with folded arms, and no place for him to look.

"Mr. Chyne," says the Old Man, "wrap the body of Brawney Thompson in the same flag he rescued from this man Kuhlamar. When Thompson goes into the sea, let the flag go with him. Mr. Kuhlamar, if the enemy had been shooting more to the gain of the United States, and less to its loss," says the Old Man, "I would be heaving *you* overboard—bagged in your own quarantine rag, which is the symbol of your soul."

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I see five little specks away in our wake, under a pall of smoke. I see Buck Williams, propped ag'in' the berthing, in tears, and his banjo with a broken string. I thought of Brawney's Madeleine—she and him in the light of a lamp at home, with their heads together over the speech that the congressman did n't write.

"The first I knew I had me heart, I found it in me throat!"

says I, with me eyes on the flag at the peak. "And what will his Madeleine say to that?"

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THE TRANSIT OF GLORIA MUNDY

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THE TRANSIT OF GLORIA MUNDY

E friend Clarence O'Shay was not especial for his beauty; but for character—and 't was the chaplain himself said it—O'Shay would celebrate himself as frequent as not. For once I remember a loud-howling thunder-storm at Norfolk, one night, and me and Clarence setting ashore in Handy Billy's Retreat, when all at once was a soul-splitting broadside of lightning, and Clarence rose up in the middle of his drink, and went outside, saying never a word. And after several minutes I missed his not coming back, and I went out to find him in the pouring rain. And across the street, in a flash that lit up the whole United States, I see little Clarence with his two hands above his head—ahold of a lightning-rod. "What are ye there for, all wet?" says I. "Sure, 't is the divil's own attack of lightning," says he, gripping the rod like a dying straw; "and I 'll take no chance to be hit. For what is the use of them safety devices," says he, "if no one will use them?" And he never let go, if ye kicked and explained and wept with him till morning. It was then, as in his affair with his heart between him and Miss Mundy, that his character stood out on him like the comb on a cock.

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His affair of his heart was up North. Ye can still see the spot, no doubt, like a bear with a patch of its wool off. 'T is on a mountain-side four miles or more from Baranoff Castle, to port at the entrance of Silver Bay.

'T was one Sunday, laying at Sitka, and an old man come over the side with a look like the taste of bad medicine. A small pocket church organ was under his arm, and hymn-books, too; and his face all whiskers and hair. He give a black smile at the crew, as to say, "'T is a foul lot of cattle ye are!" and he went below. They was rapping the ship's bell for services; and young Tommy, the jolliest chaplain that ever shirked his prayers, says he to me: "'T is his own new religion, invented by the old man himself; and neither Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, nor pagan it is, but a deal of each—all dovetailed. And by Michelangelo," says the chaplain,—'t was before the department sent him his resignation for being such favorites with women,—"by Michelangelo," says he, "the old man's daughter is the handsomest north of Cape Flattery!"

And me and O'Shay disappeared in the wake of the chaplain, and we found on the torpedo-flat the old man unlashing his church organ and shaking out its toes; and there, setting on a hand-pump, we come sudden on his daughter, like the unveiling of a statue. Her eyes was India ink, and her face the dimensions of a plum, with skin like ten dollars in gold.

"'T is half Siwash and half Yankee trader ye are," says I to meself; "and with them eyes ye could nail a common man to his doom." And she set like an ele-

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gant firefly in the middle of darkness, till every man present, and likewise the marines, stood mesmerized in his shoes; for she was dressed out all flying with colors, slick as parade. She inspected us freely, and no more scared than a baby; but none would provoke her but Clarence O'Shay, which was the rawest of the company; and a little squat carroty squab he was, with his two running lights blinking like bats.

"Will ye steady the hymn-book?" says the girl, smiling, and pointing plumb at O'Shay. We was all worrying at the fine lines of her, that was like the figure 8; but snicker we must, for Clarence's face dropped open, and his mouth give vent to a smile of dismay.

With that she begun disturbing the organ, till it groaned:

> Shall we gather at the river
> Where bright angel feet has trod?

And the old man bellered out to beat it if he could, with some of the crew bearing a hand, especially at the tail of a verse. And Clarence must crowd the sleeve of the girl to hold quiet the music, though the breeze through the ports was impalpable. In the middle of each verse I see her casting her black eyes at his countenance, which would wink as if dazzled; and I noticed her fancy more pleased with the growly notes beneath O'Shay than them piping ones to leeward.

Next, the old man stood aiming his finger, shouting, "Ye 're all black-hearted sinners!" which was the start of the finest sermon I ever hear. "Ye 're all black-hearted sinners," he roared, "and your souls wallow-

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ing in the luxury of corruption, and every son of ye worm-eaten with the leprosy of Satan!" And with that he bore down on us like the Spanish Armadillo, shouting the catalogue of sins, and calling us blue, black, and red rascals to your heart's content.

But the girl was leaning back in her seat, with Clarence O'Shay and the organ and the howling of the sermon as obsolete as twenty miles away; and her eyes was half closed, thinking to 'emselves, with a bit of anxiety riding her brow, like a flaw on a pool. Till the old man give a shout that spent his wind, and the girl bolted up, observing O'Shay, as I says to meself, with a trifle of female calculation; and she worried the organ to "The Sweet By and By," with newfangled words to it. And him leaning over and hiding the music with his billet of a thumb, and her demure as a dove, but singing it now and again across his face, till I cocked me ears. And at the end I seen her bidding good-bys to him on deck, and wringing hands with him. The old man stopped and scowled back at the crew, as to say, "'T is maggots ye are!" Then he pursues her over the side, with his hand-organ.

Clarence O'Shay run up the mast with a spy-glass, and followed the girl over town till she hid herself with the copper-green church. "Hist, man!" says he, making beckons with his hands. "Lay up here." And with us two hanging like parrots aloft, he whispers in me ear.

"'T is a secret I have to tell ye," says he, "and no one shall know it but me. Ye mind when I leaned forninst her shoulder? She was talking and singing in me ear the while! When it was the first song,

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says she in the middle of it, singing along with the rest, but her eyes rolled up at the beams like innocent questions:

'*Shall* we gather at the river?'

says she. And several times she sang it that way; and I thought I see her laugh in her sleeve, till I chewed on it when the old man was ventilating his belief. Then it was 'The Sweet By and By,' with all hands going as ye please in the chorus, and she belting the little music-box to beat the band. When every one was crying:

'We shall meet—we shall meet!'

—as best I remember it—bedad, at the same time she was singing with a quarter of a glance past me face:

'*We* shall meet—*we* shall meet!'

Then next all the rest of them let go:

'We shall mee-ee-eet!'

paying it out slow, but hanging on to it; and the old man took it up by its middle, and says, as though it was settled:

'We shall *meet*—we shall *meet!*'

—till they all did meet at the end of it, and they says, all heaving together:

'We shall meet on that beautiful shore!'

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But, bedad, the girl she let go both eyes at the beams to onc't, and she sings nothing in me ear but:

'Tuesday night on that Injun River shore!'

And at parting says she: 'Ye 'll soon forget the words ye heard this morning?' With that she gimme a look with wide eyes, and went overboard. What do ye make of it?" says Clarence.

So I went to Chaplain Tommy, that was smoking his cigar.

"Handsome she is," says he, agreeing, "and deep-running water, too—neither pious nor heathen, but the riddle of the Phenix. Her father with the organ is a bachelor, and it happened by accident. For Gloria was the daughter of Bald Eagle, that ruled near by Chilcat; and then old Mundy was living to himself at Sitka, being a landmark there before the purchase, and coming from where no one knows. A strange man he was, with his will-power stronger than his self-control, and mainly content to be pope and prophet of his own religion, and paddle his canoe, ten days to a cruise. Then along comes a Yankee to Chilcat, and makes a hole in the nest of Bald Eagle; and when Bald Eagle finds it out, he makes a hole in the Yankee, big as the moon. Till Bald Eagle gits word that a sergeant-marine is coming to chase him, and he ups and starts to meet the marine; which the bluebottle, by virtue of having ten mates with him, drops the old Eagle overboard into the tide from his canoe. Then, by a happy disaster," says the chaplain, "along comes old Mundy, nosing to himself through the Straits, and

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overhauls the empty canoe, that was full of war-truck and a small baby girl. ''T is a special dispensation!' says he, and he named her Gloria; and, as well as ye can raise a pansy to blossom for a lily, he raised the girl. 'For me daughter,' he would say, 'will bring the true religion back to them Injuns, and all over the universe—to the glory of the world,' says he. 'And when I die, all mine is hers, with privilege to marry at thirty, which is soon as women have sense.' For the girl but last year would be running away with a half-breed, and the old man tore the side of the Injun's head with a slug from his shot-gun, to the disappearance of him ever since. And some say she mourns him still, and many would sympathize with her, but the old man won't let 'em set foot in the garden."

Then me and O'Shay took verdict of what she had said, and Tuesday evening we went on the road winding back of the town. 'T is an elegant spot, and damp beneath the trees as a bog; and ye scarce drop your hat but a toadstool hops up there and grows on its brim. 'T was eight o'clock, with the sun in that latitude fifteen degrees in the sky. Six hundred yards from civilization we spied two females, setting with their eyes in the river, as if nothing would happen. And says O'Shay good evening to 'em.

"Eh!" says she—for it was she. "Oh!" says she, overhauling her mind. "It 's the same I met on shipboard. How happen ye here?"

"How!" says O'Shay. "Sure, I 'm 'gathering on the shore.' For '*we* shall meet,'" says he; "'*we* shall meet!'"

"I don't know what ye mean," says Gloria, looking

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off as blank as a bowl of milk. "But 't is a pleasant evening here."

"Sure," says O'Shay. "And have the elegance of taking this box of candy, with the pleasure of me compliments."

And I noticed the other girl, that was full Siwash, with a face to beat the rhinoceros, had drawn to one side, leaving the occasion to itself; and I went off behind a tree and smoked me pipe, while Clarence was searching his wits.

"'T is a fine evening, as you was saying," says Gloria, with a trace of a smile, as though he was comic.

"Sure," says O'Shay, a bit lacking for remarks, "and pleasant, too," says he. And for a while I hear him scratching his head.

"Three weeks from now will be full moon," says he, all at once. And then for some time I hear 'em staring at each other.

"Are ye married at home?" says Gloria, by and by. "For men that has wives already should not be giving sweets to the girls."

"Married!" says O'Shay, overdoing himself. "Would I wear a ring in me nose?"

"Every man should be married," says she, stiffening up; "and one that scoffs at it is not usual the best in intentions. I must go, for I notice me brother coming, that would take it hard seeing us. Good-by, Mr. Sailor, and don't speak of this. For me father is that jealous of me as his soul," says she, with disgust in her voice, "and me kept penned away like a sacrifice, and me own house a stranger to even me brother. The first clear coast I ever had was next Friday, when

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me father is witness at court. Don't say that I noticed a stranger, though me father's hard heart be me ample excuse. Good-by," says she; "and a better respect for women come to ye soon; for maybe till then I won't expect to see ye."

And with that she skipped off to the other girl, twice as light as ye 'd think for the strength of her build. Soon she come past with the one she says was her brother. And the Injun, that was a broad-shouldered buck with hands like an oiler's, and nifty-looking, save the scar on his cheek, would stare at O'Shay till little Clarence was hurting to reach up and biff him. We walked back, sifting the conversation, till I says to O'Shay, bedad, that the girl was defending marriage to him, and to see her next Friday. And Clarence says that if it was marrying, why, he had nothing to lose by it; which was true, for he had nothing belonging to him but his pipe and his next month's pay.

"'T is an elegant creature it is!" says Clarence to himself. And he spoke the same in his sleep from his hammick. And all the next day he had absence of his mind, till I kept telling him he was in love; and Clarence would ask was he, sure? And it tickled him like a young mother. On Friday forenoon he give his head to the barber to fix it for the lady of his choice—till he looked like the light-weight champion.

"I dreamt of a cottage home, all crowded with victuals and beer," says he, smelling of bay-rum to drive ye to drink. "And I 'll leave the navy when married; for, with that face asking it, she could git me a job as police."

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Then we off to Gloria's house, and I waited in the garden, thinking with me pipe, and asking meself what a fine-flavored lass like Miss Mundy would want with a squab like O'Shay. Till I seen coming the Injun with the scar, and give warning, and none too soon; for the Injun found Clarence exuding from the house, and would be staring in Clarence's eye that hard that Clarence believed it his duty to do him up, since sooner or later a fight must be, the Injun being his brother-in-law. But Gloria whispered the Injun inside, and she blushed till I says to meself it was not her brother at all, but was the same that would carry her off last year. But what Clarence told going shipwards took it from me mind.

"'T is an elegant creature it is!" says he; "and her name will be Mrs. O'Shay. When I knocked she was playing the organ for 'Pat-says-he-what-says-he-where's-me-old-hat-says-he'—till me feet near run off in a jig; but when she heard the knock, and the rhinoceros-faced Siwash girl opened the door, she dissolved to the hymn called 'Revive us onc't more,' as though a mistake had been made. 'Oh, 't is but you!' says Gloria, all setting in the latest millinery. 'I supposed 't was me father come to blow me up,' says she, 'for I thought I 'd seen the last of *you*.' '"T is me,' says I; 'and you not married yet?' 'Not yet,' says she, laughing, and playing the jig; 'for it needs a brave man; one,' says she, 'that can paddle his canoe by night, and not afraid of me father with his gun.' '"T is me that 's not,' says I; 'and name your time.' And with that she hit a few sounds, and stopped short. 'Will ye take me to Silver Bay by midnight,' says she,

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as if struck by a big idea, 'and fetch me the chaplain of the ship, with his book, to marry me?' 'I will!' says I. And with that we begun to talk; and she says how she knowed 't was the man for the purpose the first time she seen me."

Then I spoke to the chaplain for 'em.

"What!" says he. "Her marry an ass like O'Shay! Ye 're a badly implausible man, Sudd Lannigan; and a loose-fitting tailor to the truth ye are!"

"Upon me heart, sir," says I, bowing, "'t is so."

"Then," says Tommy, pleased at the chance, "I 'll go talk to her."

And with considerable waylaying I negotiated 'em together that evening, with the chaplain rigged out in his shore clothes, with his collar that high that his toes would scarce touch the ground. But Miss Gloria was timorous, and she would not speak the name of O'Shay, gazing at the ground till ye thought she was six years old, and saying that yes, her choice had been made.

"And most uncommon sudden," says the chaplain; "and a bad sign for happiness. And your father will disinherit ye."

"Let him do it!" says she, flaring up as though ye had scratched a match. "Let him do it, and give his money to save the Chinese! Do ye think I 'll live me life like this? I 'm nothing but a nun,—the whole town knows it,—and his house nothing but a convent," says she, "and him a keeper that won't lemme say me soul 's me own. I can't go walk with a girl but he says 't is improper. If 't was no hope of better, I 'd drownd meself in the sea! What chance for a

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human life have I, with praying from morning till night, in words all guttural to me, and only hymns on the organ to please him, and pretending to fast for the good of me soul? What is his heathens to me—why, as good as him! And better than me, that is neither one nor the other, but just a young girl that would wish onc't a while to laugh on Saturday night, and have gentlemen friends, and dance a bit, and be like the young ladies below in the States. I 'll leave him and his money, if it breaks his hard old pagan heart; and ye can marry me or not, and ye can tell on me or not," says she, sobbing on her sleeve; "but I 'll git away—if I have to swim to Juneau; and if no preacher is there, so be it, and the divil have me; for I 'll never sing another hymn nor hear a sermon as long as I live, nor give a cent to the poor!"

And with that the chaplain took to comforting her hands, which was his favorite trick, with me looking north and south in me shame. And I seen Gloria peeping at him from the corner of her eyes.

"'T is not for me to say who ye shall marry," says Tommy; "but I warn ye that a common sailorman, and one of such parts as this Clarence O'Shay, is a bad handle to your natural advantages, which is sure to attract to ye men of brains and good luck. Me conscience tells me to warn ye; but if ye think no better of it, then count on me to marry ye to who ye shall choose; though I 'll be no party to your comings and goings till the minute of the ceremony."

And we come away, with the chaplain moaning to himself and gesticulating of pigs and pearls. On the pier was the Injun with the scar, talking with Clarence

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as easy as ye like. "'T is a decent young man, after all," says O'Shay; "for he says howdy-do, and he says 't was all a mistake, his evil eye. 'T was only I look like the man that stole his watch." And the Injun smiled and give us a chew of his plug. 'T was plain to see that he was the same that was shot with the slug, and ye liked him for it. I did n't know then that the Injun was just back from Juneau, and flying only by night, so that the old man would n't suspect him.

I fixed up the chaplain, and then I must take me safety in me hands to arrange with Gloria her escapade from the house.

"Have care for your life in this place by night," says she, leaning over the fence; "for his mind is portending disasters, and his temper standing on end. Onc't I am married, and some one pursues me, me husband can shoot him in the eye of the law. But if me father with his gun should catch us leaving, 't is somebody killed."

"Git out!" roars old Mundy, coming to the door. "Come into the house, ye adventurous girl; and ye need n't eat till morning!"

And I went off without cursing him, which I lay it to me credit.

'T was by such that at eleven o'clock one night me and O'Shay rowed around from the Ranch, and past the castle, creeping along the beach to the Mission end of the town. The sun was two hours down, and the twilight gone chasing it till 't was near as dark as would be. And shortly we crawled in our socks through the garden, and set like frogs beneath the

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old man's window, waiting for the tune of his snore. At the sound of it, Gloria says never a word, but she looks out from the second story, all wrapped in a cloak; and asking no persuasion, and silent as a spider, she slides down the dark on a clothes-line.

The rhinoceros girl must go, too, says she, stubborn as women can be; but the rhinoceros took the cold sweats, and never mind your cross-explanations, she 'd not offer herself to the air. Till Clarence shinned up the rope and lowered her down with a barrel hitch, kicking and puffing, and falling into me arms with a yell. And old Mundy rolled from his bed with a shout, and we put for the beach, the whole cavalcade, with Gloria in the lead, goading the rhinoceros, and little Clarence jumping the fence. And we scarce had shoved off when I see the old man, half dressed in a sheet, running for the shore like a frozen spirit, with howling to shake the hills.

"He 'll git his gun and his canoe—'t is a fast one!" says Gloria, standing up straight in the bow; and ye could see nothing but outlines of her, like a statue in the dark. "He 'd better stay at home!" says she; and that she was the same that had wept with the chaplain ye would n't believe.

We watched the old man galloping for his canoe; but in a minute he stopped like his wits was pulled. For a stranger had rose from the canoe and paddled away with it; and, as now I know, 't was the Injun with the scar.

"Ye 're dom'd forever!" shouts the old man, roaring after us with his rage.

And says Gloria: "Praise the Lord! Praise the

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Lord! Ye have n't your gun, and ye can't spoil me life any more!"

"True for ye," says O'Shay, exerting himself with his oar. "But who the divil is this stealing your father's canoe?"

"'T is the sweetest angel on earth that did it!" says Gloria, loud for a thousand yards, and hugging herself for joy. 'T was the first word she had spoke to O'Shay, and that she 'd not noticed him more I took for maidenly fear.

"So it is, me darling," says O'Shay, calling attention to himself, that was by the shortness of his length but a fragment beside her.

"Ye need n't call me your darling," says Gloria, turning on him and drawing away her skirts. "And mind ye don't do it again."

Such that Clarence got mad, and muttered to himself he would call her what he dom pleased when the knot was tied. And I give meself thanks for me freedom from women. We seen the stranger in Mundy's canoe absorbed in the gloom, with Gloria spoiling our trim to watch him. Then the night was on a center, and ye just made out the lines of the mountains, with the lights of the town dropping out as we put it astern. And me and O'Shay rowed along sulky; for she set to herself like a captain, cooking her own designs; and the pleasant picnic me and O'Shay would have made of it soured before it was born.

"Why don't ye go faster?" says Gloria, in a while, as though we was hired, and she at the end of impatience. "Don't ye know he 'll chase ye?"

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But we mumbles we could take care of him. We was first headed seaward; but back of an island we altered our course, with Sitka disappearing, and a new color of darkness forestalling the morning. The face of the girl was taking shape, and I seen it all mingled with gladness and gloom, like the balance of an April day. And she fidgets and sighs like a tree before rain.

"Did the chaplain promise ye sure he would come?" says she, a bit sharp. "Don't say ye made a mistake! For I 'll never go back, if I lose me soul! I hope the old man's heart will dry and crack with the wind of his prayers," says she—or such words. "I hope he 'll live to die of second childhood, maltreated like me. 'T is been the same since five year old, when he would n't lemme git a doll at the Mission Christmas tree, for fear of me changing belief. What 's that?"

'T was the ping of a bullet, with the bang of a rifle, coming from some direction in the gloom—'t was hard to tell where. The rhinoceros give a snort.

"Lay down in the bottom, all of ye!" says Gloria, jumping over the thwarts till she grabbed my oar. We heard another shot. "Lay down," says she, "and let me row; and when he sees me, maybe he 'll stop."

I muttered a swear, and I says did she think we was dough?

"For'ard with ye, and take cover!" says I.

"Yes," says Clarence; "all hands take cover but me; for the funeral is mine, and, bedad, I 'll steer it."

"I 'll do no such thing," says Gloria, ducking at the sound of another shot.

"I 'll stay where I am," says I.

"Ye 'll take orders!" says Clarence, firing up.

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"Is this your wedding procession, or is it mine, ye pig-headed spider!" says he, putting his thumb up at me.

"It 's mine," says Gloria; "and suppose he would kill the both of ye, how could I repay ye? For I warn ye, ye 'll not be half rewarded for escaping me from me father," says she, pushing and hauling with us. I thought the boat would capsize and us drownd, with our expostulations, till we noticed the old man had ceased firing. The bullets had been plunked at random, with the hopes of finding us out; but he had lost our trail by the misleading of our voices.

"Good!" says Gloria. "Brave and honest ye are, Sudd Lannigan; and don't take hard of me words. 'T is life and death, and me locked in me room since yesterday, and not a bite. For he says the evil spirit must starve in me flesh. Many 's the day I 've spent likewise, till I 'd crawl down-stairs and steal food in the night to keep from freezing. So don't take it hard. Sure," says she then, calming her voice, "if I was rich I 'd pay the two of ye handsome."

Even O'Shay understood that such talk to the man ye elope with is something ye can't understand; and Clarence blowed loud on his nose with the elegant plaid pocket-handkerchief which consisted of his trousseau; but the sound of it passed by her ears.

"For I never had nothing of me own," she goes on, "not even a rag doll. He says I was chose for a mission, and me life belonging to God, that sent him to save me. I 'd prefer to have died! And will the chaplain sure find the place?" says she.

'T was gitting daylight, and them eyes of hers show-

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ing from the pale of her cheek. We was off in the wilderness, crowded by mountains thick wooded with trees to the swash of the tide; and I see a clear coast behind. The landing-place Gloria would fix for herself, and the stopping-place, half-way up a hill, where she says we would see the launch when it come. She says she was cold; and we lighted a fire, both growling inside at her way; for she seemed to consider me and O'Shay, if at all, as but beasts. She had no remarks, but was watching the wind, and would throw weeds to the flames till the smoke curled away like running to tell where we was; and all the time she would be hurrying to look for the chaplain, though we told her the steam-launch would bring him, and blow on its whistle. Me and O'Shay set drinking perfumery, the whisky of civilization being barred to the Territory by law; and Gloria would not participate, saying such things was the curse of mankind. "'T is still an elegant creature it is," says O'Shay, apologizing for her, "though a bit unusual. But most of them women," says he, fanning himself to look undisturbed, "is all alike." And he would gaze offhand at her, looking blank as it 't was nothing at all, yet with Gloria now and then stumbling over him and turning to find what it was. Till finally Clarence's face give it up, and he set beating the ground with his fist. And for me, I mumbled it was a ladies' pleasure-party him and me was flunkies to. Then she see our distemper; and with that she threw back her head, with her hands on her hips, and discovered her teeth with smiles.

"I thought it the custom of gentlemen sailors to

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drink to the health of the ladies present," says she; "and here ye are, like pigs in the trough!"

"Then here 's to the health of Miss Gloria Mundy," says I; "and may the corners of your mouth always point to the sky."

"And never regret that ye rose to be Mrs. O'Shay," says Clarence, swelling his chest.

By her advice, we drank to the rhinoceros, though more for the sake of the drink; and then to the chaplain; and then to the man that stole Father Mundy's canoe—which I did n't know then was the Injun with the scar.

"For he 's ten times the best of any of ye," says Gloria, singing it as though our liquor had gone to her head.

The time begun going fast, and the sun painting the sky; and the perfumery sent up Clarence's spirits till he says, after all, 't was an elegant lass she was. She stood high on a mound behind the fire, with her black hair loose and flying in her face, and her nose as straight as a rule; and she laughed with excitement, with the smoke flaunting up between us and her, till your heart flapped with admiration.

"Long life to me Mrs. O'Shay!" shouts little Clarence, exulting over her like an apple on a bough; and he could stand it no longer, but ups and afters her, calling, "A kiss to sweeten me drink, me darling!"

But just then we heard the smashing of bushes; and here, in the crack of a thumb, we seen appearing, first the Injun with the scar, with a rope tied round his neck, ready for hanging; then old Mundy himself, in his shirt, trousers, and beard, holding the end of

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the rope, and prodding the Injun in the rear with a rifle. The rhinoceros lit out for the woods.

"Ye *will* kidnap me daughter, ye brace of man-thieves!" says the old man, with the rifle resting on his arm and pointing at the group of us. "Ye *will* combine to marry her to a sneaking aboriginee like this I have on the end of a string!" says he. "God would forgive me for shooting him now."

"You leave him alone!" says Gloria, making a rush for the weapon, and turning it off. "I 'm done with your wild dervish tactics," says she. "If it 's shooting, shoot me."

"Off, ye lost angel!" cries old Mundy. "There 's not one of ye fit to live. The divil has one and all of ye, and I would do the service of God if I blowed ye all back to Satan in a heap."

Me and O'Shay made a grab, and twisted his firearms away from him, him frothing at the mouth with rage. In the midst of it we heard the whistle of the steam-launch, that had gone by without our knowing, and stopped a short way beyond. We seen the Injun and Gloria running off together up the trail.

"Head 'em off!" shouts the old man. "They 're gone to elope with each oth..

"Divil a bit," says O'Shay. "'T is me that your daughter has came here to marry; and ye can ram that information hard down the bowl of your pipe."

"You—ye little red Irish flea!" says the old man—or such words. "Then what for do the two of 'em chase off holding each other's hands?"

Then I seen what was the explanation of Gloria for all of our time in the boat.

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"Ye can give it up, little man," says I, laying me hand on Clarence's shoulder. "She 's put up the job to marry the Injun, and you nothing but the baboon's paw to draw the old man's fire."

But ye might as well explain to his thick little skull as a stone.

"Avast!" he bawls. "I 'll chase her till me feet wears off me stumps!"—shaking his fist at her; and he put off up the mountain-side, with his two little bandy legs twinkling like spokes of a wheel, and me and old Mundy pursuing the rear. The trail led up around a spur and down the other flank, to meet the steam-launch. Away went the five of us, leaping like hare and hounds at a hurdle-race, with Gloria leading the line up the steep, and skipping like air over trees and boulders, and wearing, as I remember to this day, brown stockings on her feet.

"Come here!" yells Clarence, his voice smelling loud with perfumery. "For I 'll chase ye till the hairs of me head is as missing as an egg!"

But never a word says Gloria, running like a chammy, and her face white with fear. I seen her throw up her chin and shut her teeth, then draw away like a winner, with the Injun behind her, still dragging the rope from his neck. We come where the trail split and joined further on; and Gloria took the long of it, fearing the short of it, that led by the edge of a sharp decline. She disappeared around the bend, and the ground give way beneath our feet, and the three of us stopped and grabbed each other. At the same time I suddenly see ten thousand cataclysms of brown stockings exploding in the air. I found meself

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hurling through space, handhold of old Mundy's beard, and with total disregard to the laws of gravitation.

When I returned to meself, it was laying on me back, afraid to more than half open me eyes for fear the jar of it would bring down the rest of the mountain. The fresh dirt was commingling with me face and insides, and all around I heard the light swash of the ripples of the bay, which laid lapping me feet, with a bald eagle looking down at me from a tree-top with its eye.

Then I heard a trembling voice behind me. 'T was old Mundy praying, with a bloody nose. The Lord had seen fit to spare his own half-sinful life, says he, while at the same time executing judgment on the two rascally villains that laid dead beside him. But he says he hoped the Lord would have mercy on our souls; for he would n't enter no complaints if we was spared from a hot hereafter and let wander in space, groaning over our misdeeds. He begun mumbling out of a prayer-book the service for dead souls, winding up with: "O Lord, forgive them their transgressions. Amen!"

In the middle of it I set up and looked for little Clarence. I seen him like a log at the water's edge, with the rising tide spattering his face, that was gray as a fistful of putty.

"Ye brass old Cogswell image!" says I. "What do ye sit there for, with a man drownding to death behind your back?"

I stooped over to haul little Clarence up and empty the water from him. Old Mundy jumped out of his skin, and landed on me back.

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"'T is you—you that connived this conspiracy, ye white-headed sepulcher!" says he. "Take that, and that, and that, ye Satan!" says he. And he hammered me with his prayer-book till it went to pieces and filled the air that full of beseeches as a church chimney. The profanity of it lost me me temper, and I bucked him into the water, where he sizzled for a second like a live coal.

"Come to, Clarence, me boy!" says I, shaking him, and glad at the color of life that showed in his face.

"Is the ceremony over?" says Clarence, with his eyes shut.

"'T was no ceremony," says I. "'T was a landslide."

"And me wife?" says Clarence, a bit confused.

"Begad," says I, "your wife has gone to her wedding."

The launch come panting around the point.

"Have ye seen Miss Gloria Mundy, sir?" says I.

"I just married her to the Injun with the scar," says the chaplain. "And good luck 't was not your drunken O'Shay. Dear me, what 's the matter of him?"

We all looked off at a sail-boat scudding with the Injun and the rhinoceros and Gloria. Old Mundy sent up a howl.

"She that I bred to save souls!" says he.

"And two pints of perfumery smashed in me breeches!" says O'Shay, mumbling.

And says the chaplain, with a smile: "Sick transit, Gloria Mundy!"

"I wish her the same," says I to meself; "for she did n't treat Clarence square."

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A HARD ROAD TO ANDY COGGIN'S

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A HARD ROAD TO ANDY COGGIN'S

HE naked statues stared at us along the hall, each one as if to say, "What the divil is two common men doing in this private palace, anyway?" But they did n't faze me, for I knew all about 'em from a newspaper clipping which by chance I had in me pocket; and says I to Clarence O'Shay:

"Do ye know the carpet you 're standing on cost thirty-five dollars a yard?"

"The saints!" says Clarence, stepping off of it.

"Do ye know the mosaic floor you 're standing on now cost thirty-five dollars a foot?" says I.

"The divil himself!" says Clarence, stepping back on the carpet.

"And the man that owns it all is worth twenty-eight millions in gold," says I.

Clarence's eyes bulged out like little blue beads on a golliwog.

"Could he come by as much as that honest?" says he.

"Sure," says I. "For the stealing was done by his ancestors; and his mother that rich by continual marriage and divorce that she never carried the same handkerchief twice, but put it away in a drawer."

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The suspicious eye of the lackey in the white shirt and swallowtail come back down the marble stairs and shrugged his nose at us.

"No one in this house knows anything about you two," says he, laying hold of the door.

"Did n't the gentleman tell us to come here," says Clarence, "and did n't he give us his pasteboard?"

"Oh, maybe he did," says the lackey, "and then, again, maybe you picked up his card in the street." And with that he opened the door to the night and let in a breath of the fog; and me and Clarence fingered our caps with rage.

"Hold on, William!" commands a voice in patent-leather shoes, running down the stairs, all pink with haste. "You are the two men which Mr. Wallace said he would hunt up for me; and you 're just in the nick of time."

"Yes, sir," says I. "The gentleman told us you 'd pay us ten dollars and a pleasant evening—"

"And a hot dinner, which we ain't had any," says Clarence.

"Yes, sir," says I. "But what the gentleman wanted us to do for you in return he did n't have time to describe, but told us to run—"

"And you 're just in the nick of time," says the absent-minded Poet, which we saw he was from his overgrowed hair and the fiddling of his hands. "I do hope you understand we want the real thing," says he, "as far as possible."

"We have no idea what you want us to do," says I, inviting his explanations.

"They are made of wood," says the Poet, musing to

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himself, while me and Clarence looked questions at each other; "but they will sound all right, I think," says the Poet. "And what I want especial to say—oh, there goes the music! Come on!"

And in the gasp of his own breath he galloped up the polished stairs, with me and Clarence chasing his paper dancing-pumps like four cobblestones—past long corridors, and lady's-maids, and boys in buttons, as many as a dream, every one staring at us like the flight of strange birds, and we all the time guessing as to what he wanted us for and what it was that was made of wood. Till the Poet burst through a door and we after him; and all of a sudden here was me and Clarence in Newport, behind the scenes of a private theatricals, up to our chins in society. 'T was such a swarm of the wives, daughters, sons, maid-servants, and man-lackeys of millionaires, all running this way and that, and smelling of cut flowers and violet-water, and jingling with jewelry and glittering with clothes, that me and Clarence was nigh overcome with the altitude of it, and would have liked to crawl off in the dark like two mongrel pups at a dog show.

The Poet had burrowed himself in the crowd; but here comes William, and says I, smiling kind: "Will you please ask the gentleman what is it that 's made of wood?" And says William: "No, I will not!"

We said to ourselves had he fetched us to play on something of wood, like the castanets or the violin, for which we had none of the gift? And we begun to feel as foolish as two plumbers called in on the run to a case of nose-bleed. And, besides, the Poet would

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seem to have clean forgot of us, and the stares of the women kept pinning us close to the wall, like two foreign insecks. Till Clarence, that had his appetite all spread for the hot dinner that no one would bring us, and could not keep his morals upright without ballast of food, begun to take hard of the passage of time, and says he:

"Come away from this foolish place, and let 's keep on to Andy Coggin's and get a plate of beans."

And, to sweeten your temper, comes William and boosted us off of the stage, and says did we think was the cream of society aching to witness our beauty?

"Oh, yes," says Clarence to me, in a burst. "Get off the stage, and get off the earth—that 's the way it is with them swells. This place may be all right," says he, loud enough for every one; "but I 'm going down to Andy Coggin's to get a plate of beans."

And the women all opened their mouths to each other like dying fish, till me face tanned with shame. But a friend of the Poet says he:

"I 'm glad you 've come; for we could n't have had the play without you. I suppose you 've tried 'em on?"

"Tried on what?" says I. "What is it we 're wanted to do?"

And he put his finger to his mouth and pointed to the curtain; and up it went, with me and Clarence stranded in the wings, and no more intelligent than when we entered the house.

We see a background of good-looking maidens all setting in the woods; and one that I will say was as handsome as ever need be, she was the main con-

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sideration of the play. And says she, all speaking in rhymes and fine simile and such high-sounding language as no poor girl could afford, the gist of the following:

"I 'm a most misfortunate young person from down here at Tholwick-in-the-Glen. And though I do look as if I was up too early this morning, me character is beyond approach. For the fact is," says she, breaking into tears, "just now when the sun was not yet gilding rosy on the mountain-tops, some one waked up me father—waked him up before he was out of his bed, and killed him with the cruel end of a stick. And me, poor romantic bird, I 'm out looking for me uncle, that was reputed to be hunting the wild boar this morning—or else," says she, throwing both eyes on the floor, "some handsome young knight that would love me for meself alone. But," says she, blubbering again (and Clarence was deep affected), "no one appears to like me style, and the best thing I 'd do is to crawl in some hole and die, like a tired dove!"

But on jumps the Hero, a strapping young foot-ball kicker from Harvard, shining in his armor like a brass tea-pot.

"What—a lovely young thing like you!" says he. "Why, when you walk in the garden the lilies turn green, and a bee stopped for some time at your lips, I hear, thinking your words was honey. Show me him that slew your parent, and I 'll write his name in the skies of evil fame," says he, "for I 'm Sir Hothryn; and to-night, sweet Yvernelle, you and me will be married with the end of the candles that buried the old man."

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"Never!" says the Villain, breaking through the door of his castle and landing between 'em. "Young man," says he, "you promised your hand in marriage to me daughter Thuthelred. Leave this stray virgin alone, and go into the house and make love to Thuthelred, ye forgetful beggar, or else meet trouble. For I 'm a bad man, and suspected of killing not only Yvernelle's father, but yours, too."

"Then, bedad!" says the Hero, "I consider meself justified in keeping me word of honor to the fair Yvernelle. Look," says he, pointing up at another young woman that stepped on the stage and got lost in the flare of the Heroine's beauty, "observe the approach of the villainous Thuthelred. That woman is swearing to keep you and me apart; but, on me soul," says the Hero, "I swear that you, Yvernelle, are a better-looking girl than this Thuthelred."

"What," says the Villain, "her prettier than my Thuthelred? A slap in the face of me honor!"

And with that the orchestra struck up with chords of disharmony, and the Villain cut a round hole with his sword in the air, and jumped through it to get at the Hero, that had come off with nothing but a dirk; and the only thing that saved the Hero's life was the coming down of the curtain.

"And never a hiss!" said Clarence, waving his hand in disgust at the stage. "They can sit and hear of a young girl's father treated like that, and they never give vent to a word of objection—a fine creature like that," says he, "and pretty as ever was made! And that Hero was no good; for why did n't he pick up a cobble and make an end of that man with the sword?

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I 've always heard ill of the aristocracy," says he, all vacant with hunger, "and now I believe it; and in such a place where doings like that is received with applause I will not remain!"

"And you two stopping here all this time!" says the Poet, red with exasperation. "How in the world do you know if they 'll fit?"

"What fit? Fit what?" says I.

"Look here, mister," says Clarence; "I don't know what it is that I don't know whether it fits, and I don't know what it is that is made of wood; but whatever it is, I can neither play on it, eat it, nor spend it for beer; and this place is all crazy, and I 'm going down to Andy Coggin's to get a plate of beans."

"No, no—hold him!" says the Poet. "What will me play be without the fight? Could n't ye see that from reading the book?" says he, answering several questions from millionaires in the same breath.

"What book? What fight?" says we.

"Oh, 't is most extraordinary if ye have n't understood," says he, with impatience, brushing every one else aside and dragging us into a room. "Here 's the two suits of armor," says he, "and why don't you get into 'em? And here 's your wooden swords. And there 's half a bowl of punch. And what I want you to do is precisely this:—just a minute," says he; and a lady's-maid hauled him away.

Clarence got that amused by the punch that he let me fit him into his sheet-iron vest, with the arms and legs of a lobster.

"'T is the liquor of the aristocracy," says he, with his head in the bowl; "and I 'm wondering how long

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before I 'll arrive at some opinion of it." And he grew that tame I could put the sheet-iron head on him, with the face that opened and shut; and then, when he had absorbed the dregs of the punch, he gave the ghost of a smile. But when I stood him up complete and creaking in the rivets, he begun to complain of the ancients for fighting in such foolish clothes, and I knew he was running down again, and had arrived at no opinion of his liquor at all.

"Them spider-legs of yours is the most awkward I ever see," says he, watching me try with the armor, and him all at outs with creation.

"Them ancients was all dwarfs," says I, sharing his humor; "and this tin trousers is a total misfit."

"That 's right," says he; "say I 'm a dwarf. And you get me all jailed inside of this crazy invention, and then you call it all off! The whole place is misfits," says he, jumping up, all maudlin with famine. "The liquor is weak as pap. And that Angora Poet ignores me, and that William de Stiffneck insults me. And never a taste of food, though ye hint as loud as a parrot in its cage. And I 'm going to take this tin foolishness off me back," says he, fiddling violent with the armor, "and I 'm going down to Andy Coggin's to get—what 's the matter of it?" says he, wrestling with his iron gloves and trying to find his hands and feel for the buckles of his breastplate. "How do I get out of this?" says he, raising his voice beyond all decency. "Do I back up ag'in' the wall and break the shell of it like a flea? Le' me out of here!" says he, growing frantic. He dashed himself ag'in' the wall, and caromed off, jingling like a tinsmith. "Un-

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screw me head off of this!" he commands, pulling at his helmet. "Ye 'll not, then, will ye?" says he. And with that he took up a chair and hit himself that hard in the helmet that it knocked him down on the floor.

"What 's the matter here?" says the Poet, breaking through the door.

"It 's beans—beans!" shouts Clarence, gesticulating with his legs like a beetle on its back. "I 'm on me way to Andy Coggin's to get a plate of beans!"

"Maybe the smell of food would revive him," says I, withholding me sarcasm.

"Here!" says the Poet, snatching a strange pastry from William's tray. 'T was a bit of cream paste hit up with a stick till it looked like the froth on a beer, and rolled inside of a cooky the thick of a post-card; and the Poet opens Clarence's helmet and passes it in to him.

"What 's this?" says Clarence.

"'T is food," says the Poet.

"Food?" says Clarence, with a gulp. "Ye call that food! I open me mouth for a hot repast, and, bedad! ye give me a half-gust of wind beat up with an egg! Take this Poet away," says Clarence; "take him away, or I 'll do meself harm with me feelings."

Then me and the Poet took consultation, and I come back to Clarence.

"There 's supper waiting at the end of the play," says I. "And the man ye 're to duel with will be that William the lackey, that says he was once in the cavalry; for I 'm too big for the armor, and William is just your size. And the Poet says that the cause of

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the fight will be your trying to save this beautiful Yvernelle from the hands of that Villain and William."

"For her?" says Clarence, jumping up. "And ag'in' that William? Why did n't ye say that before? Come right along and give me the cue. Look at that, now," he whispers, pointing to the Villain, that was dragging the fine young lady by a chain to a tree. "People turn out for to see a poor girl maltreated like that! Yes, yes, I know 't is only a play; but where 's the fun of it, and her face as sweet as the Countess of Cork? What does this William say to that?" says Clarence, all loose in the tongue with excitement; "and what do I say to him back?"

"Whist!" says I. "The Poet has give me the book of the play, and I 'm finding your place."

"O cruel foe," says the poor girl, praying to the Villain, "here 's me father slain at sunrise, me mother poisoned while saying the morning prayers, and now you stole me safeguard, me magic ruby, while I was washing me face at yonder purling brook. Heaven will get even with you for this!" says she.

"Me innocent dove," says the Villain, "let 's turn over a new leaf and forget that 't was me that slew your father and mother!"

And here in the wings, with his wooden sword, stood the proud lackey William, iron-sheathed from the middle to his ends, and ready to back the Villain for any blackguard trick that might be, with Clarence's hair bristling at the sight of him.

"'T is a tragedy," I whispers to Clarence. "You are the noble friend of Sir Hothryn the Hero; and the Poet says, above all things, fight strong, and not weak."

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"Yes, yes," says Clarence, "strong, and not weak. And a fine-looking head she has, and elegant feet," says he, expanding with pleasure. "And poor William! What will I do with his comic remains when I have him out of his shell?"

"Whist! I 've not arrived at the killing," says I, blowing at the pages.

"Poor William!" says Clarence, with a chuckle. A heavenly smile was bathing him head to foot; and he dropped the vizard of his helmet to hide his expectations. "Bedad! I will make you an entertainment of that William!" says he, tickling himself with the words. "Bedad! I will make a climax of him!"

"Clarence!" says I, all jutting with perspiration.

"What, dear?" says he.

The words stuck in me throat. How could I break to him what I had read?

"Clarence dear," says I, "it says in this book of instructions that the end of the fight—the end of the fight—" and here I broke down.

"Yes, yes," says Clarence, all beaming with light through the holes in his armored face. "Do I dig a hole in him with me sword and bury him in it?"

"According to the book," says I, swallowing me heart, "the end of the fight is a tragedy. And Sir Hothryn does n't rescue the young lady at all, but gets killed. And the killing is done by William; and just before that—why, William is required to kill Sir Gathred; and Sir Gathred—that 's you!"

'T was as though I had stepped on me pet canary in the middle of its song. From that moment from his helmet, that had grown as light-hearted as a baby,

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exuded never a sigh nor a sign. "Did n't ye understand?" says I, tapping his iron shoulder. But his whole suit of armor hung like an empty one in the Tower of London. I opened his face and looked inside of him. There he was; but his mouth was as tight as a clam, and I could n't catch his eye. I made a circle of him: but when I looked here, his eye traveled there; and when I looked there, his eye traveled here. And I bit me lips like the taste of a funeral psalm, and mopped great drops of fear and doubt from me brow with the back of me hand.

For Yvernelle, besides, was pulling us all by the nerves. Ye 'd thought 't was true she was stolen away from her lover, and had no hope and no friends; and such was the melancholy of her voice and the clank of her chains that ten little misses in the front row all blew their nose and would not look sidewise.

"Clarence dear," says I, walking on eggs, "'t is a bit misfortunate, sure; but you would n't think of refusing to die, since 't is meant so in the Poet's book, of course?"

He snapped down his vizard and closed himself in in the dark; and all me answer was a blood-curdling moan from Miss Yvernelle; for the Villain had just tried to pat her hand, and the end was approaching.

"Clarence dear, could n't ye speak?" says I. His eyes was set across the stage like diamonds, glittering on the opposite William.

At that moment the Hero shinned over the castle wall and stepped on the Villain's toe and called him a hideous mask. The two rushed off fighting in the wings, with the orchestra doing shivers on the minor

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strings, and Yvernelle stitching back and forth, all stewing with tenter-hooks, till back comes the Villain with a groan.

"Hothryn has cut off all me thumbs!" wails the Villain, falling down. "Arrest him for carrying a magic sword!" And on struggles the Hero, and gets chained by three farmers to the same tree with Yvernelle.

"'T is the end, at last," says she, breaking down.

"Clarence," says I, "'t is your turn soon. You *will* have reason—and let William kill you comfortable?"

But he stood as silent as his picture.

"Farewell, Hothryn," says the Villain. "You was a brave young knight; but you got tangled in another man's rope, and I 'll have you executed at once, on charge of heresy. Summon Sir Tancred!"

And on drops William, like a bantam from the hand. Clarence gave motions of life. I listened outside of him, and me thermometer fell within me; for I heard him getting up steam.

"Farewell, me love, then," says Yvernelle, between her tears. "I 'll make a funeral of meself as soon as you are dead."

"Hold!" says Hothryn. "I 've just heard the horn of me faithful friend Sir Gathred. Art thou a man, Sir Tancred? Wilt fight Sir Gathred?"

"I will!" says William, as stern as turning away peddlers from the door. He began stamping his foot and cutting out fancy silhouettes with his sword. I laid me hand on Clarence like a boiler planning to burst.

"O'Shay darling—for good manners' sake!" says I.

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"Hasten, Sir Gathred!" commands Hothryn, tipping us the wink. "On you hangs all my sun and stars!"

Then I shut me eyes like jumping off a cliff in a dream; and Clarence give a leap and exploded in the middle of the stage.

When I looked up I knew that the worst had begun. The audience had risen in their seats. The Hero and Yvernelle stood frozen together with astonished hands, the Poet gesticulating with a face like quinine, and the servants all pallid with fear. And in the center of it whirled William as Tancred and Clarence as Gathred, fuming and clashing like wild iron hornets, with the orchestra crashing and blaring like mad. They squared off one second for breath; then they collided together like two evil angels; and William fell down with the magnitude of a chandelier, and arose again, and fled, bedad! like a hairless dog, leaving pieces of himself behind him, and calling out to the saved, with Clarence pursuing him like the wild Juggernaut, till they both got drownded in the cellar, by the roar of the audience and the shrieks of the servant-maids.

The Hero and Yvernelle looked at each other all mouthless. How was he going to die, with no one to kill him? Or she to poison herself without reason?

"Go on with the words—*do* something—die—die!" shouts the Poet, in a whisper from the wings.

But the words would have sounded too foolish, with Clarence and William still passing away like a thunder-storm in the cellar. The eye of the beholders went sudden to the Villain, that had laid still with his wounds, and had watched the fight with his back to

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the footlights. He was writhing and red in the face beyond control, that irreverent he was, and laughing at the cruel mess that O'Shay had made of the play.

"For Heaven's sake! can't somebody do something?" calls the Poet, his voice half tears, and the audience wondering what was the hitch.

"All right," says the Villain, shaking like jelly. He rolled over to the audience. "Alas!" says he, with a frightful face, holding up his two decapitated thumbs, "me wounds have proved fatal! Hothryn and Yvernelle, join hands for the dance of life!" he shouts. "For 't is evident," he says, with a grin that near split his face in twain, "that the Fates never intended ye should perish. I 'm dying," says he, with a horrible smile, "and well I 'm paid for this day's work. Now, ye wooden image," says he, rolling over to the man at the rope, "come down with your curtain!"

And down it went, to a tumult stupendous. Clarence come up from the cellar alone.

"You ignorant fool!" squeaks the Poet, with rage. "You, with your beastly knock-about—you, with your low-lived horse-play—"

But in burst the door and a mob of millionaires.

"Hurrah!" says they. "Girls all sobbing in every direction, and that surprise—that blood-stirring combat at the end—when ye had us all worked up believing 't would turn out a tragedy! Masterly!" says they. "The finest thing in the language! And let 's have something to eat."

I found a short cut across the lawn to that door where William had insulted us. There, in the mist

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and electric light, was Clarence, coming down the steps in all his armor, shining like Hamlet's father.

"Where the divil ye going?" says I.

"Have no conversation with me," says he, waving his wooden sword, "and keep company with yourself. I 'm on me way to Andy Coggin's to get a plate of beans."

Then he swallowed himself in the fog; and I heard the howl of a dog that ran off with its tail at half-mast.

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CLARENCE'S MIND

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CLARENCE'S MIND

RELATED to ye once how when we was dawdling down to Andy Coggin's place to get a plate of beans, we was enlisted off the street to fight a duel in the full armor of the middle ages at a millionaire's private theatricals. But because they did n't treat Clarence right, and his appetite had made him evil-minded, why, he ups in a terrible huff and leaves the house with still the armor on him. Clarence come down off the millionaire's steps as shining as a man in a ballet, and turned himself loose in the streets of Newport at midnight, clanking like Hamlet's ghost and carrying a wooden sword. He 'd not gone forty rods before he sent an old woman puckering up her petticoats and squawking off through the fog like a fowl. Then, bedad, he begun to wonder if it was n't a trifle sudden of his temper to be chasing away by himself, wrapped up in this kind of accoutrement.

And such being his emotions, all soldered up as he was inside his helmet, and sweating like a man in a diving-suit, Clarence could not keep on the honest road between the electric lights, but he had to lay his course on the broad open lawns of several contidgious estates where the grass was more silent to the clink of his feet;

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and he says to himself if he heard the police he would pose as a new bronze statue. Till presently he sees a fancy iron fence before him, and he says he would hang himself by the small of his back on one of the spikes and turn a back somerset to split off the armor. But first he had to pass by a house with an open window. There was a young man sitting at the window, and staring out at the June-bugs that was flitting through the mist to get at the light of the chandelier inside. The young man had his chin in his hand, and there was an empty skull and a big fat sheepskin book on the table beside him; so I 'm thinking 't was some youngster that was learning to be a doctor and found himself in the mood for diversions. And Clarence's modesty would n't let him be seen in such a strange dress as he was, and so Clarence makes to be all careful and run quiet past, beneath the window, in the sharp patch of dark where the light did n't strike. Which he did; but at the same time he falls several feet beneath the window down a coal-hole, with a clatter of sheet-iron and general consternation like a row in a boiler-shop.

Then up jumps the young man and fetches his electric lamp to the window; and when he illuminates the coal-hole from above he sees an extraordinary little object, all cased in metal, trying to crawl out of the place, and bluing the air with exclamations of his feelings, and falling back each time like a bug in a glass bottle. No doubt the youngster says to himself that such a man was either crazy or ought to be. And when Clarence looks up and sees the quiet smile beaming on the youngster's face, it made Clarence

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hot; and says he, "Good-evening, ye fool; did ye never see a man in a coal-hole before?" And still the youngster beams that contented smile on him, till Clarence says aloud, "The boy is crazy, if there ever was one!" and he shuts down the door of his helmet and takes on to sulk. In a minute he feels something dangling ag'in' his bosom-plate.

"Dearly beloved brother," says the youngster, "tie the end of the lawn-tennis rope around your waist. For I 've wine and cigars awaiting ye here. I was full of me thoughts," he explains, all grave as a graven image; "for it might have been that it might n't have been," says he, "except for the coal-hole."

And in a minute, with hauling and pulling, Clarence delivers himself through the window at the end of the rope, like a lobster out of the sea. And all to his surprise, here he was in an elegant mansion, with the signs of superfluous wealth sticking all over the walls, and being received as a private guest by this youngster that was as tall as a giraffe and as solemn as a mock funeral. And little Clarence and him looks at each other, and they blinks as sober as though divil a joke had been let loose in the entire world since the fall of man.

"By pursuing your eccentricities along with mine, we may arrive at a law of nature," says the youngster, with an encouraging smile. "For I observe you 're the opposite of me in most particulars," says he; "and since extremes is accused by philosophy of meeting at the ends, then here we are."

Clarence looks at him back, then scratches his helmet, trying to get at his little red head; and he says

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to himself that either he was up ag'in' one of the most learned men of the times or else a lunatic.

"I did n't get the whole of your question," says Clarence, playing it all polite, "owing to the fog settling in me ear. But I suppose ye 'll insinuate some explanation of this tin foolishness I have on me back. Well, ye see, I was merely following down me way to Andy Coggin's this evening, with the intention—"

"Beg pardon," says the youngster, with elegant breeding, "but would you mind beginning with some history of your father and mother, and what complaints was common to them—"

"But what the divil would that have to do with me going down to Andy Coggin's to get a plate of beans?" says Clarence, pointing with his sword.

"It breaks me heart to interrupt ye," says the youngster, with his hand up like a parson; "but just a few preliminary remarks on the type of your main hallucinations, and whether chronic or intermittent, would throw considerable light—"

"Now you 're talking electricity," says Clarence, seeing a lot of strange instruments about the room, "and sure I don't know one spark from another. But, anyway, what would that have to do with me going down to Andy Coggin's—"

"Me brother," says the youngster, "I was approaching the question: how long have you enjoyed insanity?"

"Me insane!" says Clarence. "I was never insane in me life."

"Yes, yes; but, man to man," whispers the youngster, "how long since ye lost complete control of your mind?"

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"Sure, I never lost me mind," says Clarence; "but I do begin to suspect that you did."

"Oh, have peace with yourself," says the youngster, all soothing. "Let 's burn incense," says he, "and look for truth at the bottom of a bottle, till we find which one of us is craziest."

He sets Clarence in a leather-mahogany chair, and gives him a cigar as long and fat as a railway spike; and into a goblet lined with gold he pours a drink of Madeira that Clarence says was meat and drink and father and mother to him, that pleasant it was, and the bottle left standing so near! And Clarence clung to the bottle like saying good-by to your sweetheart, till he begins to feel as though drifting away on a private cloud.

"Mister," says Clarence, throwing up his feet on another chair, "I don't know whether your mind is off or on, but your heart is still waving at the masthead, sure!"

"Ah!" says the youngster, pointing both forefingers at him. "'Sh!" says he, going to the door. He looks out in the hall, then out of the window; then he comes on tiptoe, and whispers in Clarence's ear. "I 'll give ye me word of honor," says he, "I 'm as crazy as you!"

"And several times more," says Clarence. "For me own mind is on as firm as the comb on a cock. And me appearing in this armor—if that 's what ye mean—why, I was merely on me way to Andy Coggin's—"

"Listen!" says the tall young man. He takes a piece of paper and draws a triangle and a circle. "The

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first symptoms of losing your mind," says he, pointing to the circle, and in a loud voice as solemn as a lecture —"the first symptoms is thinking yourself still sane. And the next step," says he, pointing to the triangle, "is thinking your neighbor is crazy. For, laying all reason aside," says he, tearing the paper to bits, "of all authorities, living or dead, I recognize meself as the greatest on earth concerning inflammation of the nerves, lunacy, idiocy, and tomfoolery. And why? Because to perfect me knowledge of the subject I went insane meself!"

"The divil!" says Clarence, shooting up to his feet. "And that 's what 's the matter of ye!"

"Ye 've hit it in the eye," says the youngster, seeming all full of enthusiasms. "For instance, suppose you was to cover both ears with your hands—if your hands is big enough: now, what do ye hear?"

"I hear like under a bridge with the cars running over," says Clarence.

"That 's what you think," says the youngster; "and some of them surgeons of the mind would know no better. But, in fact, 't is the first sign of insanity. 'T is the maggots ye hear—at work on your brain, and chewing on the chain of your thoughts."

"Bedad, not in my case," says Clarence. "For me own head is on as straight as the knob on a door. The reason of me acting perhaps a trifle queer when you first saw me, why—"

"Between bottle companions," says the youngster, as kind as a father to him, "ye need have no modesty at all about your condition. Let 's see ye cross one knee over the other."

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Clarence crossed his knees to show how easy he could do it; and when the youngster was not looking, Clarence claps a hand to his ear again and hears the maggots working there again, and says to himself, bedad, it was queer. And the youngster hit him a cut with the sharp of the hand on top of the knee-pan, and Clarence's leg flew up all astonished at itself beyond control; and Clarence says to himself, by the great horn spoon, he would n't let his leg behave that way again. But as often as the youngster hit him on the knee, up flew the leg, whether he liked it or not. And Clarence sees the youngster shaking his head; and that shook the peace of Clarence's soul; and says he:

"What would ye make of that, doctor?"

"It means," says the youngster, "that ye 've lost your responsibility complete below the knee. If ye was to commit violence with your thumb, the eye of the law would regard ye as criminal. But if ye was to accomplish evil with your feet, they would do no more than examine your legs for insanity. What 's the matter of ye?" says he. "Is your cigar too strong fer ye?"

For Clarence had put down his goblet, and set thinking as hard as the maggots would let him. He had found something wrong with his eyes—they would n't seem to be driving in harness together; and he forgot of the wine he had drained, and he asked himself if 't was true he was leaving his wits.

"Did n't I start out all intelligent with Sudd Lannigan," says he, with a fall of the voice, "to get a plate of beans?"

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"Dear me!" says the youngster, with his face like a coroner's jury, "I hate to tell ye, but you 're getting rapidly worse. I 've noticed a change since ye come through the window."

"Worse, ye say—and permanent?" says Clarence, breaking out in the brow with cold perspiration.

"Upon your soul, as one raving maniac to another," says the youngster, "can ye say that in the last two hours no one has taken exceptions to your acts? Am I the first to intimate you was crazy?" says he, pacing the floor, and stopping to deliver that at Clarence.

"What if he did?" says Clarence, all stewing in his collar. "It was only me best friend, Sudd Lannigan, when I was fighting the duel; and he 's a dom fool, anyway. It ain't true, and I ain't crazy."

"It ain't true!" says the youngster, with a laugh. "And you parading Newport at this hour of the night dressed up like that!"

"I tell ye 't was pure accident," bawls Clarence. "I tell ye 't was nothing but absence of mind."

"Absence of mind! Absence of mind!" says the youngster, from the other room, pointing at him. "That 's what it is—for your mind is clean absent and gone, like the meat of a nut!" He gives a sniff of professional pride, and he leans up ag'in' something that looked like a sideboard; but 't was an orchestrion inside, and the youngster pulls the handle of it. "Put your hands to your ears ag'in," says he, "and listen if the maggots is any better."

So Clarence covers his ears, and the orchestrion begins to play the music of "The Turkish Patrol," arising more and more in the distance, till ye could hear

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it through your hands. Clarence starts up in his chair.

"Say!" says Clarence, "where will that music be at this time of night? Don't I hear a military band?" says he to the blank face of the youngster.

"I have no doubt ye think ye hear something," says the mock doctor. "Each crazy man has delusions of his own. I once believed I could hear the divil himself preaching sermons to the damned," says he, "and most entertaining. But a dishonest lunatic stole the delusion from me mind with a bodkin," says he, "and the next day—"

"Whist! That *is* music," says Clarence; "real music! Don't ye hear it? It 's growing louder."

"Poor man!" says the youngster. "Do ye suffer badly?"

"I tell ye it *is* music! Are ye deaf?" says Clarence.

"Deaf?" says the other. "Sure, me ears is as sensitive as a chronometer—I can hear the beating of me own heart in the middle of a drum corps," says he; "but I don't hear any military band at this moment."

"Ye can't hear that—growing louder and louder?" says Clarence, his forehead bursting with dew. "Now —now, ye do hear *that*, doctor?" says Clarence, clutching him by the arm.

"There, there," says the youngster, all soothing; "don't let it get any louder. You must control yourself. Take some wine. I command ye not to let it get any louder!" says the youngster, pointing his finger.

"Why not?" says Clarence, all caving in. "Why not?—for it *is* growing louder. I could swear—Holy

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Mother," says Clarence, turning round, with his head behind him, "I could take me oath 't was in the house!"

"Come, now," says the youngster, embracing him tight, "hold fast, and don't let it get any louder. If it does," says he, "'t will burst out your ear and escape from ye, and the world be full of illegitimate notes. Be a man, now!" says he. But Clarence could n't stop it. The Turkish Patrol was arriving in front of him, and smashing the cymbals in a way to raise the dead.

"Ah!" says Clarence, with his eyes starting out like a horse. "Ah!" says he, with a dying shriek. Then the band begun moving away again and going round a corner. "Oh!" says Clarence, with a look of mild surprise.

"Is it passing off?" says the youngster, holding his head. "Is it growing less?" he says.

"Yes, maybe—maybe," says Clarence, sinking back. "Yes, yes; I think 't is passing off," says he, in a moment. "But, doctor, doctor," says he, drawing a snort, "by the saints, that was a narrow escape! The drum of me ear was blowed up like the belly of a moon-fish, and every minute I thought 't would explode. Dear, dear, what am I coming to, anyway?" says Clarence, rolling his eyes with the realization of it. "Could n't ye give me some kind of oil to rub on me scalp?" says he.

The young man sits looking all grave at him, and finally shakes his head. The orchestrion had died away, but the dew was still standing on Clarence's brow. He reaches and gulps a half-bottle of wine by the neck.

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"I 'll forget me name next, I suppose," he mutters, clapping his hand on top of his helmet. "I 'll meet meself in the looking-glass and never bow acquaintance!" A sob came bubbling out of his throat, and it turned to a foolish laugh at the end of his tongue.

"Doctor," says he, "I would give the head off me neck to get me brains back. How 's that for an offer, ye extraordinary divil!" Then he falls away sad again; but in a minute he bursts out with: "Doctor, why is it I want to laugh? I would laugh," says he, "till I burst the shell off me back, if it was n't irreverent to me misfortune of losing me wits."

Then a terrible pink flush swept over the inside of him at the sound of his silly words; but he could n't bring what reason he had to the end of his tongue. "Good-by to me senses," says he to himself; "good-by, Sudd Lannigan; and good-by the ship and the crew and the whole sailing-match. And hello the clink and the mad-house for evermore."

"The divil take you!" says Clarence, turning on the youngster. "I 'd never known I was mad, nor any one else, if I had n't been fished up through your window. But if it 's mad I am, then mad I *am*—and I 'm going to have a good time!" He snatches a Maori war-club from ornamenting the wall. I 'm thinking the twinkle went out from the youngster's eye; for he tries to lay hold of Clarence to prevent him from wrecking the room, and the tough little man shook him off like a drop of water on a dog.

"What are ye doing?" says the youngster, with his feet clinging to the floor. Clarence was swinging the war-club over his head.

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"Doctor," says he, "do ye see that elegant crystal bowl there?"

"What!" says the youngster. "'T is worth thousands of dollars!"

"Hurrah!" says Clarence. "I 'll cut it into ten thousand dimes!"

"Wait, wait," says the youngster, all in a gasp. "It 's all a mistake—you 're not crazy. Don't smash that! It 's me father's pet bowl!"

"I 'm as crazy as ever was made," says Clarence, swinging the club. "I never saw a big piece of glass yet but I wanted to smash it; I suppose it was me lunacy growing inside. And I 'm going to smash that bowl," says he; "for they 'll take me away in the luny-cart, whether I smash it or not."

"Look here; as a personal favor to me,—for the wine and cigars," says the youngster, throwing himself on Clarence's bosom,—"will ye kindly put down that club till I tell ye something?" Clarence puts down the club to lay hold of the goblet on the table, and the youngster whisks the club out the window, down the coal-hole. Then the youngster draws up his breath from his boots. "It 's three o'clock and time to go home now," says he, giving the broad hint.

"Oh, don't you live here?" says Clarence, shaking hands with him.

"Yes; but you don't," says the young man. "Well, I 'm glad you enjoyed your wine and cigars," says he, moving toward the door. "And I 'll tell ye now that you are no more insane than I am."

"No, for I could n't be," says Clarence, sitting down in a chair. "But I 'm terrible daft, doctor," says he,

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clean puzzled not to find the club where he had put it. "I think I 'll have to smash that bowl with me hands," he says, staring suspicious at the youngster.

They looks at each other a second. What Clarence would do the next minute the young man was waiting with terrible fear. He hits on a plan to be rid of Clarence by strategy.

"I 'm sorry to suggest your going now," says the young man, "but in fact I feel a fit coming on. And when I have me fits, then I 'm in possession of the divil and the strength of ten men; and I might have homicidal intent and malice aforethought breaking out on me."

"Sure, I never watched a fit before," says Clarence, settling back in the arm-chair and getting his humor.

"I feel it coming on," says the young man. "Ye 'd better go and leave me alone," says he, "for I 'm apt to murder ye."

"What kind of a man would I be to go and leave ye alone," says Clarence, "when by staying here I can prevent ye committing a murder?"

"Ye thick-skin!" says the young man, grinding his teeth. "I 'll put it this way: I want ye to go, because I 'm bored with your society. How 's that?"

"Such impoliteness is the first sign of your fit, I suppose," says Clarence. "But I 'm understanding ye." Clarence was leaving the scare about the music far enough behind him to begin to get back his heart. But the young man was rising in rage.

"Oh, look here, now," says the youngster, "what 's the matter with us two laying this nonsense aside and speaking as one sane man to—"

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"How the divil can two raving lunatics speak as one sane man?" says Clarence, getting riled. "Why don't ye go on with your fit?" says he. "Bedad, if I was having a fit, I 'd have it, and not talk so much."

"Shall I ring up the police?" says the young man. "Shall I have ye taken away by force, then? Ye poor fool," says he, from the bottom of his wrath, "I 'm no lunatic."

"Ye poor lunatic," says Clarence, "I 'm no fool. It just strikes me this: if you get swinging on the chandeliers here with the strength of ten men and pull down the ceiling, then the blame is on me. 'T is better I ring up the police meself, and let 'em take care of ye till your folks come home."

The young man unlocks the front door, and Clarence follows him to the hall.

"There 's the door," says the young man, "and there 's the police call. Ye can use the one or the other. But if ye don't go in two minutes it will be *I* that will have the police come and carry ye down the steps," says he.

Clarence looks at him in disdain, and, saying nothing, goes and pulls for the police. "I shall tell 'em to treat ye kind and harmless," says Clarence, all calm, sitting in the hall chair.

"*I* shall tell 'em you *are* a lunatic," says the young man, planting himself sulky in the chair opposite. "'T will save explanations and serve you right."

Clarence sits up with all the dignity of a nigger. "I shall tell 'em you 're the same," says Clarence.

He begun thinking that, after all, 't was not such a bad evening, though he did feel the need again of them

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beans at Andy Coggin's. And the more he considers the more he says to himself 't was a mistake him being insane. He 'd been deceived awhile by this poor lunatic. But no matter. He would get the credit for having saved the young man from harming the elegant gimcracks on the walls; and the least the old man of the house could do, thinks Clarence, would be to give him ten dollars and recognize him next day in the street.

"Bedad," says Clarence, whispering to himself, "Sudd Lannigan thinks I 've been arrested for going the streets in disguise. But I 'll get the police to unscrew this armor off me, and then I 'll drop it somewhere in the tall grass, and the man that owns it will not take the trouble to hunt me up aboard me ship. And I 'll have the laugh on Sudd Lannigan for once, sure!"

Then the two of 'em heard the hurry of two Burly-boys on the gravel walk in the dark. The two Burly-boys pounds up the steps with their hands over their stars, and looks through the glass doors into the hall.

They saw on one side the young man standing and pointing at Clarence O'Shay, that sat still inside of his antique armor-plate, as sure and smiling as the tin-plate trust. Then they opens the door.

"This man is crazy," says the youngster, pointing to Clarence.

Clarence gets quiet to his feet, all solemn and dignified. He clears his throat, and gives a nod to the police. "I 'll explain the whole story from end to end," says he. "This evening, at nine o'clock, as I was pursuing me way to Andy Coggin's place for the purpose of taking on a plate of beans—when—"

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"He refuses to go," says the young man, "and I want him removed from the house, please."

"—taking on a plate of them beans of Andy's," says Clarence, as though no one had spoke, "when me and Sudd Lannigan was picked up off the street and hired in to fight a duel at some millionaire's private Punch-and-Judy show with nothing in me stomach. And—"

"Come along," says the Burly-boys, clapping their hands on Clarence's wrists.

"What, ye lunatics?" says Clarence.

"Come *along; that's* what!" says the Burly-boys.

And in the split of a wink Clarence felt himself lifted as by an earthquake, and carried out of the house and down the steps, gesticulating, procrastinating, and expostulating from the soles of his feet to the top of his voice.

The next minute Clarence was the main consideration of a small crowd of fly-by-nights that was escorting him and the police to the station. And, bedad, if we at Andy Coggin's had n't heard him passing by and riling the clouds with his objections, and if we had n't run out and tore him in the dark from the police to a boat convenient by, and pulled for the anchorage of the fleet—why, they 'd have had him up in court the next day on charge of losing his mind.

But the minute I had the armor off him and throwed it overboard—then overboard went Clarence himself, and swum for the shore.

"Where ye going?" says we.

I could hear him grinding his teeth like nails.

"I 'm going to Andy Coggin's," says he, "to get a plate of beans."

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THE PROVING OF LANNIGAN

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THE PROVING OF LANNIGAN

HERE was one story which Lannigan himself has never told. Once upon a day he found himself in a steam-launch, bowling up the bay and homeward, at high tide and twilight and spring, with the crew at military silence and two officers in lively conversation with a lady. Lannigan had not regarded the lady, though the rating "A1!" had been whispered to him at the moment she stepped aboard. But here, as he leaned in his seat and dreamed with the evening, the flare of a match set her profile sharp against his eyes, and started up a thrill in Lannigan that kept him gazing long when the soft, compelling features had blurred in the gloom again. Strange, strange! Time had been too busy erecting her fortunes all these years for ever a touch at her lovely face. He settled down with his head in his hands, seeming to stare at the keel of the boat. But he did not see it, and he did not hear the beat of the screw or the rush and ripple of the waters.

What he saw was the wall of a long, deep garden, and, at a corner hidden by trees from a time-worn house, a girl, who leaned over, muffled in a scarf, lest he might discern her face in the starlight. What he

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heard, in this night of June, was her rich, old-country voice, with a bit of the blessed brogue in it, and a touch of the heart, he thought, and a quaver of longing.

"Then why will I never see ye again?" he pleaded.

"If I disappeared for years," she said, "I 'd find ye still here whistling to the robins every morning. Sure, ye 've stolen the secret of happiness, and that from some girl, I think, such a tongue ye have."

"Then ye 'd better share half the secret with me," he said, "or, faith, ye 'll be robbing it all."

"Now, true, if I thought I 'd never grow old," she laughed, "I 'd scare ye for saying that. I 'd make ye think I swallowed your blarney."

"What 's growing old to do with being young?" he said. "Why, the pleasure of growing old with you would keep a man young forever."

"Ah, yes," said the girl; "for is n't a man young always? But there 's nothing that keeps a woman young, and there 's plenty that makes her old. And that 's how little ye know of us; for I believe ye never had a mother."

"Did n't I have a mother, though?" said Lannigan. "And as handsome she was as you 'd be, now, if a bat would steal that scarf away. And she never growed old: she stayed preserved in the sweet things that none could keep from telling her. 'T was she that learned me how to read the heart behind the smile, Mary Travers; and that 's why I know ye like me prayers, though ye do pretend ye 'll come no more to the wall."

"Ye child!" said Mary Travers, drawing the scarf more tightly. "Ye never even saw me face. And

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if ye did, ye 'd pass me by; for I 'm the ugliest girl that ever slaved for a living. And maybe that 's why I 'm scared of to-morrow night's moon."

"Whatever marble you 're made of," said Lannigan, "it 's the heart of burning fire inside I 'm knocking at. What 's a face, Mary Travers? Sure, the divil himself is a handsome man. Ye need have no face at all, if ye like."

"Oh, with such a tongue inside your head, ye 'll never lack a roof over it," said Mary Travers. "Well, it 's good-by to ye; and when I 'm an old woman I 'll remember how pretty ye can talk to an empty face at a wall."

"I 've something important to tell ye," he called. But she had fled, and the stars looked down upon his puzzled countenance.

When he returned, the following night, she was not there, and he could not understand. Their dozen trysts had yielded emotions that seemed to him too inevitable and from too near the source for her now to keep to a threat of absence made so lightly. He gave a robin's whistle and hummed a snatch of a sailors' chanty as he walked the length of the three inclosing walls. Then some one in the garden began tapping with a trowel on a flower-pot. He stopped and called, but only the cold wall gave echo to his greeting. It needed the brush of his feet retreating through the grass for the trowel to cease and a voice to cry:

"Don't go!"

"You 're there, then, Mary Travers!" he said. The trowel resumed; his words seemed to have fallen on

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deaf ears. When the trowel paused again, as he waited in doubtful silence, it was for the voice to say:

"Here, puss, puss, puss—don't go!"

"So it 's 'puss, puss, puss,' then, Miss Travers?" quoth Lannigan. "Well, I wish I was a cat—ye could n't drive me away. Will ye never cease with that trowel?" he cried, after an interval. "Did n't I say I wished I was a cat?"

"If you 're addressing me, sir," said the voice, clearly and frigidly, "I 'm not Mary Travers; and I 'm not concerned with what animal you 'd rather be."

"Now, what are ye giving me, with school-teachers' talk!" said Lannigan, taken with what appeared the mischief of it. "I know your voice too well, Mary Travers, for I 've learned it by heart, me friend."

"Excuse me," came the voice, crisply, "but I object to being taken for a servant, and especially for Mary Travers; for I 'm like her neither in grammar nor any other way. I 'm the governess in this house, and I 'm not Mary Travers."

"Then why are ye speaking with her voice, in the garden here?" said Lannigan. "Ye 'd object, I suppose, to looking over the wall," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "to show if yourself ain't as much like Mary Travers as your voice is?"

"Most certainly I should object," said the voice. "Do you think I 'm in the habit of flirtations with casual strangers? Go away, sir!"

The young man rubbed his brow. Sure, this rudeness did not sound like Mary Travers. What were these high-priced phrases and this mouthing, and where was her brogue? He had to accept what he

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heard, though with astonishment. It was not the voice of Mary Travers; he had deceived himself, and he felt silly. Now, nevertheless, any one who had looked down within the garden would have seen no "governess" there, but would have seen Mary Travers —Mary Travers tapping with her trowel and keenly listening for what would happen next. There were stations more exalted than that of a governess for which she believed she could conquer or cloak her lack of equipment, even without the aid of a wall. Already she had so schooled herself that when she had talked these nights with Lannigan her brogue had been as much an affectation as her stilted utterance was now. She smiled. She was succeeding with the test she had put for herself; and equally what pleased her was the chance she was gaining skeptically to explore a man's unguarded heart. She waited while he kicked the turf and muttered his chagrin.

"Excuse me, miss," he said, to make amends, "I did n't think there was two voices in the world as fine as yours. Would Mary Travers be coming out to-night?"

"Mary Travers," came the voice, "is not employed to be drooping over garden walls."

"'T would improve the landscape if she was, miss," said Lannigan in another tone.

"Why, you seem to esteem the girl," said the voice. "You are evidently that sailor she 's talked to so much. I 'm sorry for you."

"I had n't found out why ye need be," said Lannigan.

"With her purring ways and her Irish blarney," the voice went on. "They gave her a double face when

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she came into the world, but they gave her no heart at all. She 'd sell her best friend for a chance to rise in society. She 's not worth the odds and ends she 's glued together of."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, miss," said Lannigan, raggedly, "but could n't you get some gentleman acquaintance to come this side of the wall and say them words to me about Mary Travers? If ye 'd only send some one,—some man that ye would n't mind if his friends brought him home horizontal, miss,—'t would help to express me views about Mary Travers."

"Of course," said the voice, "you 're the young man that works and sings by the water, there. I 'd heard such pleasant things of your character from my friends the naval officers that I can't understand your feelings for a common domestic like Mary Travers. You 're much too good for her."

"There ain't any man too good for her," came Lannigan. "And she has her friends, too."

"Do you know how she spends her wages?" said the voice. "Why, on having her teeth inlaid with gold, and buying rubber gloves to keep her hands from showing her trade. Do you think she 'd look at a man that could n't lift her out of running up and down stairs for a living? Of course not; and that 's why she as much as told you to go about your business; for she thinks you 've neither a bank account nor a hope to get one. Some day you 'll call me your friend for telling you that."

"You can excuse me, miss," said Lannigan; "for no friend of mine says anything ag'in' Mary Travers. It 's a funny kind of a lady that talks like that of a

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girl that 's below her in station and not here to answer. Do ye think I did n't know it was n't her voice all the while? Ye might as well say the sun don't shine through the windows at church as say there ain't a heart behind such a voice as Mary Travers's. Good evening!"

He gave a look along the wall, loath to leave without some sign of Mary. There was an interval, and then the silence was broken by the voice, a little more softly and somewhat constrained.

"Mary Travers is such a goose," it said, "that when you 've talked to her a bit, I suppose you make her think she has a heart. Good night, Mr. Lannigan."

Of course, as he went home, still without a reason for not having seen Mary Travers, he began to question if what he had so indignantly denied did not contain some element of truth about her: he had met the voice and withstood it, but there was this to show for the impact, just as there was something that had shown in the last words of the voice. For his part, the notion that Mary could look upon men with such cold inquiry hurt his soul as a base intrusion of the sanctuary. If the doubt lingered on against his will, it was because of a dawning suspicion about himself as to whether she had not some right to ask for aspirations more solid than were exhibited in his humble post and his joyousness. The thought grew, and made keener his suspense.

Mary Travers did appear at the wall on the next night. She had admitted to herself that she had no reasons for coming; so she came without any. There was a bright young moon, and the girl shaded her

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face as much as she could with her scarf, and stood in the deepest gloom of the lilac-tree.

"I was out here last night," he said. "I was talking to that governess girl."

"What did ye think of her?" said Mary Travers.

"I think poor of her," said Lannigan.

"But ye 'd know she was a lady, and that without seeing her, would n't ye?" said the girl.

"Oh, her grammar may be all right," he said, "but wearing diamonds in your teeth don't make a happy home. The governess is no friend of yours."

"Why, what did she say?" said Mary.

"She said as much as you 'd throw overboard your best friend if 't would help ye to make a harbor. She said as though you laid so near the ground ye could n't see over a dollar. I want to know what ghost of a right she 's got to talk so," said Lannigan. "It 's made me want to ask you if, after all, it 's made some difference with you that I don't get very much pay and can't see the prospect of more just ahead of me."

It would have been useful to answer no; but she wished him to feel a touch of her resentment at his want of eagerness for what she thought were the prizes in the world.

"Would n't that be an easy question to answer?" she heard him say. "Does it make a difference, then?"

"There 's no need of answering it," she said at last; "for it don't make any difference to you. I mean that the governess knows the man in the next house, here, and knows I 've promised to marry him. She thinks you ought to keep away, because I ought not to be meeting ye here and him never hear of it."

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Lannigan stood motionless. His silence, as he looked long and steadily up at her, touched her conscience and made her uncomfortable.

"One woman 's as good as another, ye know," she tried to say lightly. "All women know that, and most men find it out. The girl that talked to ye over the wall last night, if she 'd shown ye her face—well, you would n't be the first that pretended to lose his heart to her on sight. And me—the poor housemaid, I 'd be forgotten. Ye seem to be losing your tongue," she said, in a few moments.

"No, it ain't my tongue I 'm losing," said Lannigan. "You say ye 've promised to marry this man. That 's a bit of a serious matter. Then why have ye come and talked the way ye have so many times with me, and him not know it? Don't ye love him?"

She felt herself diminishing under his gaze, but she would not sink to humility.

"And if ye don't love him," said Lannigan, "why have n't ye told him ye don't?"

"Oh, there 's no one needs fuss but I 'll carry my end of it," she said stiffly. "And, what 's more, I 'm not afraid but he 'll take care of me, and save me from slaving when I get old."

"And so ye 'll marry him," said Lannigan; "and ye can't stand there and say ye love him—you that have talked so free to another man under the dark! It 's because ye *don't* love him, Mary Travers."

"He 'll push his way to the front," she retorted. "He 's never been afraid to ask the world for what he wanted."

"Ye mean he has a bank account," said Lannigan;

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"and ye mean that me—I ain't got nothing to rattle but me tongue. But if that 's all, why ain't it all? What need was calling ye out in the dark with a covered face to ask me to tell ye what true liking was? What do ye think ye 'll come to, for committing such forgery?"

He was getting away from her, to where she could not reach to punish him. She made a change in her manner.

"You think I would n't keep my promise, if I made it," he heard her say, leaning toward him. "But I will. How do you know," she said, softly appealing, "whether I 'm not keeping a promise—and whether you have n't made it hard for me to keep it—harder than you know?"

"How do I know?" repeated Lannigan. "Why, Miss Travers, it 's nothing to me what ye keep, for I 'm not leaving anything of mine with ye. Good night, and good-by!"

She heard him whistling loudly in the distance, and he had never looked back. She summoned what thoughts she could to dispel the scorn he had left in the air. Chief of them was her belief, which he seemed to challenge and damage, that the sentimental needs of a man were more constant than his constancy. But how many days, she angrily said to herself, if given the beauty and willingness, would Lannigan stand against some other woman who appeared to fall in with his dreams and never fell out with his apathy in matters of advancement? She loosened her scarf and fancied herself as the governess again, glowing upon him and bringing him back to her feet, if she

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chose, before she had opened her lips. She went in and lighted a lamp before her mirror.

He had laughed and expressively kicked an old shoe from his path. He had torn a page from his catalogue, and he believed that his book was the better for being the lighter. But by midnight, in the silence of his room, the wound was flowing freely again. The memory of his mother came, suffusing him with a tenderness that spread and contritely enveloped the girl he had left at the wall. For him, whatever the wind, it was not to be bitter and brutal, but to be gravely, kindly right; and though Mary Travers was wrong, and though she thought slightly of him, it was his own lack if there had not been a dignity in his spirit so high and firm that none could pass without acknowledging it. He tried to raise his head proudly upon this basis; but it only invited him to more luminous contemplation of himself. Return to earth, and what was he, after all, in the respect of which she had flouted him? Had he ever had a higher content than to bask in the sun, with a pipe in his mouth and a jest on his lips? All those phrases with which she had flattered him about his joyousness and habit of song, it had only been her way—sweet and gentle, he was in the mood to call it—of suggesting how little the fire of ambition was alive in him.

Well, he exclaimed, pacing the narrow room of his quarters in the lighthouse station, he would make something happen. Mary Travers was not married yet; and if she felt only in honor bound to this man, there was hope. Let her bid Lannigan compel the material world for her sake, and here was the power

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to do it bursting his sinews. He sat down to be calm and decide where he would strike first to develop his fortunes, and the pendulum swung back from fancy to facts. He was a sea-dog; young as he was, he knew in his bones that nothing else could ever be made of him. He had never traded a boot-lace, except at a loss; and the main item of his assets was the more or less worthless promissory words of blue-jacket borrowers scattered all over the seas.

Accumulating riches in a world where sick men asked in the streets for bread, how it was done was past his fathoming. And for lack of knowing, he, with his long, hard arm and his chest of iron, was to be denied the woman he loved; he was to bend like a slave and pay the tribute of his heart's desire to another man who owned a key to the soulless, inexorable mystery of wealth. Here, in the waters where this other man rode triumphantly and bore away the girl whom Lannigan loved, Lannigan seemed to be sinking, deeper and deeper, till the very pressure of the depths forced him up again to his place in the scale of gravity.

Once at Bar Harbor he had jumped into the breakers and brought out a little girl who might have drowned. Her father had made an exceedingly generous offer of reward. Lannigan had said that he would be compensated enough for his wet clothes if the gentleman would take a glass of wine with him. So the wine was drunk, as between gentlemen, with none of the patronizing in their conversation. The only other tangible outcome of the affair was the gentleman's card, —he was a politician of eminence,—which he gave, accompanied by an offer of a kindly word to the Sec-

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retary of the Navy should Lannigan ever wish it. The card was still in Lannigan's pocket, after three years; for none of Lannigan's mates had prevailed upon him to invoke its promise.

Now he sat with the address before him and wrote three awkward letters, asserting that he considered himself competent for the duties of a quartermaster—three letters which he tore up one after another, each with a heavier heart. Adieu to his pride, he felt, in his own crude fashion. Any man who was a man, he told himself, would have made the dive for the girl. There had been no risk; and if there had been, forsooth, should an impulse that rose from his soul to the terror-struck cry of a child be hideously turned to advancement and coined into lucre? But he wrote the letter again: it was for Mary Travers's sake. He took it darkly forth and dropped it criminally in the box. He would have given much, the next moment, to have it back. Once more his spirit rose bitterly against Mary Travers; she was more like frigid Fate than flesh and blood in her way of letting him pass from her life. Of the regret and hope and fear that lay in the box with his letter he would have spoken more freely to the governess than to Mary Travers.

There was a day of rain, then one that brought sunshine and a telegram. Before he opened it he had steadied himself for a rebuke from some vague source at Washington. He was astonished to find that his promotion had been arranged by the great man as if with a gesture of a busy hand; and he was invited to write again when he needed something more. So, then, he was a quartermaster. If the fact did not

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restore his ancient pride, it numbed the seat of the amputation. That evening he set out for the wall. There was a heavy burden of obligation on his conscience toward the man whose daughter's life he had saved; but there was a new confidence in him, and he brimmed with things to say to Mary Travers. He specially planned the unimportance which he would give to the news of his advancement; she should see, he said to himself with a lover's fierceness, what an ignoble consideration this was beside affairs of the soul. He was coming with fresh ammunition, and he longed for the fray.

There was some one at the wall. She leaned over expectantly in a snug cloth gown, shaded by a hat of vast proportions, but illuminated at the ears and throat and fingers by rhinestones. As yet she stood where the moon came dimly, under the lilac-tree.

"Is that you or the governess?" he said. "For I've never seen either of your faces."

"I am the governess," said Mary Travers, distinctly. "Did you know that Mary Travers is going to be married right away?"

So it was for this that his three tragic days had been preparing! There was humor in it. He gave a laugh, and picked himself up, as it were. Well, he would not let himself appear ridiculous to the governess. There was something he liked about her—something a man could grasp if he wished to forget himself.

"Yes, I had an idea of it," he said measuredly, taking out his pipe. "'T was a nice girl, Mary Travers."

"Oh, she was n't very handsome," said the governess, mendaciously, "but some men liked her. You know

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you made me angry because you compared her to me. But I don't think quite the same about men as Mary Travers does: my ideas are more like yours," she said, without a blush.

"I 'm glad I met ye," he said. "Most girls, nowadays," he added, with the philosophy of his one experience, "don't have any ideas about men: their ideas is all about money."

"Not the right kind of a girl," said the governess. "You 've been as unlucky as I was—up to the time I met you." She moved a little way so that she stood in the moonlight; she looked up at the stars, and the beams came full in her eyes, and the beauty of sky and trees and stars was lost beside the beauty of her face. "I mean," she said, with a gentle smile, "that all the men I ever knew—till I met you—considered that looks was what counted most in a girl."

"Ye know why?" came the young man, inevitably. "You 're that extraordinary handsome yourself that the men can't think of anything else."

He received a look of childish gratitude, as if he had solved for her one of the mysteries of her life.

"Do you really think so?" she said. It seemed to mark a stage in their intimacy. She sat down on the wall and looked at him admiringly. "You 're the kind of man that looks terrible deep into things," she said. "I 'm thinking you could keep on looking right into any one's heart, if you wanted to."

He was so engrossed in her face that he hardly heard her; but he nodded. She seemed to accept the nod for much that he might have fittingly interjected in words. She sighed, and happily smiled, and took

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off her hat, exhibiting her profile, with all her hair, against the sky.

"Sure, you 're the handsomest girl I ever saw!" said Lannigan.

"You know," she said, "it might make a difference to Mary Travers whether you was an officer or not; but it would n't to all girls. I mean," she said, with apparent difficulty,—"oh, well, I guess you don't care very much what I think!"

"Yes, I do," said Lannigan. "I got a wrong idea about you the other night. I want to make me apology."

Her head had been slowly revolving; there was no aspect of it in which she had not equal confidence.

"Do you think it looks friendly for you to stay there?" she said, turning on him radiantly. "Did n't Mary Travers ever care enough to show you those spikes in the wall?"

Aye, he thought to himself as he climbed up, to Mary Travers, somewhere in the house that loomed beyond the trees, he was like the melted snows; and here was a woman with a way as sweet as hers, and with other attributes which Mary Travers did not possess. No one in the station of a governess had ever been so cordial to him: she made him forget the burning of his heart.

"You 're not bad-looking yourself," said the governess, now that for the first time he stood within touch of her.

"Do ye know," he said, sitting contentedly, "if I had n't been coming here to waste Mary Travers's time, I 'd never met you?"

"Then you can apologize for the way you spoke to

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me that evening, over the wall," she said. "Go on—and speak from your heart, if you have one."

She hung over him like the ripe fruit on the bough, and he held his knee a trifle diffidently in his hands.

"Well," he said, "in the first place—you 're the handsomest girl in the world."

He was surprised by the quick change of her manner. She sat down at a distance, and looked away.

"No; I 've heard that before," she said. "That does n't come in the first place with me. That is n't what I wanted."

"But, sure, I 'm chock-a-block with appreciation of ye," he said earnestly. "When I say, solemn, 'I 'm your friend,' I could n't say more, could I?"

In a moment, as she spoke without taking her eyes from the mound that raised them above the rest of the garden, there was a deep sadness and resignation in her voice.

"Of course," she said, with a shrug and a smile, "if you can't say more—why—" She seemed to choke.

"Why, what 's the matter, me dear?" said Lannigan, jumping up.

She hurriedly hid her face in her hands and shook, as if sobbing the sentiments she could never speak; and as it was Lannigan's nature to fight first and explain afterward, so now he found that he had put his arm around her.

"What 's the matter?" he said vaguely.

She sat up and pushed away his arm.

"You don't want to see what 's the matter, and so you don't see," she said. "You 're trying to let me down easy; but you can't. Nothing can."

Her utterance seemed to fail her again. She knew

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from his silence that now he understood; she waited, as one who was dumb from suffering. The seconds passed, and she wondered what he would say.

"Ye know I 'm only a common sailor—a kind of sea-horse?" he said at length. "I don't savvy the game on land, at all. I could n't take decent care of ye."

"I 'm independently rich," declared the governess. "I 'm only being a governess to amuse myself."

"Ye know ye 'd have no more friends among the officers if your husband was only a common sailor," he said. "They 'd make ye ashamed of me."

"Oh!" she flashed. "You 're not being sincere. You would n't let anything stand in the way—if you cared. You 're making pretenses! Why can't you tell me something that 's true?"

She seemed at his mercy, transfixed and helpless. All the mighty love which he thought was in her heart for him shone from her pleading eyes. They set themselves upon him as if not to let him have his will, not to let him think, but to bend him to say the three words that always afterward would be her trophy of their interview. In a moment she saw fit to look down again. He had taken her one gloved hand, and in his voice there was a truer tenderness than she had ever listened to.

"The truth is," he said, "I can be a petty officer to-morrow, if I want to accept. And you 're the handsomest girl I ever met; and you 're a lady, and no one ever had the right ideas as much as you. You seem to be all I 've dreamt of, and more besides; but, you see, you ain't Mary Travers, and you can't be. That 's the trouble. Good night, and always God save ye!"

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He had jumped down from the wall. She watched him disappear among the trees. She was full of emotions: what they were, what she wanted, she could not tell. She only knew that the night seemed suddenly grown chill, and that she was uncomfortable and unhappy, and that something was lacking.

His pride had been fortified by the admiration of this beautiful creature. He felt the strength to make a showing of dignity and indifference to Mary Travers, if he met her. When he purposely passed the wall again the following night it gave him satisfaction dimly to see her there in her calico gown and scarf and to send her a cheerful greeting and a word about the weather over his shoulder. But she called him back.

"I want you to come up here," she said. "I 've this to tell ye," she began, when he was seated and bore himself with fine neutrality: "the governess has left town; you 'll never see her again. And I 'm not going to marry that man."

"Why not?" said Lannigan.

"If you don't know why," she said simply, "then no one does."

So he kissed the one place on her cheek that was not obscured by the scarf, and he was glad of the gloom of the lilac-tree.

"Sure, it 's extraordinary," he said, pressing her hand as if it might dissolve. "Sure, ye 've given me a scare, Mary Travers," he added, in a few moments. "Me heart was drying up inside me, dear! And don't I get a look at your face?" he said, after a while.

"Not yet," she said. "I 've a deal else to confess

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to ye before I confess me face. So you 're going to be an officer, then? Hurry up and have it done before we—"

"Before we 're married," said Lannigan.

"Yes," said Mary Travers; "for I 've thought it all over. I 'll make a big man of you yet. I know how to manage people. I know how to mesmerize them. How long would it take ye to be an admiral, if ye did n't have a wife to push ye ahead?"

"Sure, not till I 've gone to sea in another world," said Lannigan, with a happy laugh. "Ye see, I 'll be only a petty officer, and not in the line of promotion —not even a warrant officer."

"Then the first thing is for you to get ordered down to Washington," she said. "*He*—he 's a reporter, you know, and understands how those things are done. He 's told me everything he knows, I guess. So I shall work the wires to have you put in the line of promotion."

"Sure," said Lannigan, with a twinkle, "ye 'll have to begin with making me a boy again. But we 'll be that happy when I am ashore that ye 'll stop bothering about commissions and gold lace. When we 're in New York I 'll take ye out to the Park every Sunday, with a glass of beer at the eating-house, and ride back in the elevated."

"I was at Coney Island once," said the girl, reminiscently. "And once I was at that swell place in Fifth Avenue. Tell me again, why can't you be put in commission, and get to be a captain, and all that?"

"Because, me darling," said Lannigan, comfortably, "I ain't got the education; and I 'm too old to be let

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into the Academy to learn it, let alone wanting the pull to get appointed there. But, sure, if I 'm in command of as fine a craft as you, I 'll ask no better billet; and if I don't keep ye smiling through life, then I 'm not me mother's son."

"You 'll have to give up the navy, then," said Mary Travers, firmly. "You 'll have to drop the brogue, and mind your grammar, and try the newspaper business. *He* makes a fine salary: sometimes he gets fifty dollars a week. He says it does n't take much brains; he says it 's mostly in your feet, if you have a little bluff."

"Think of me," said Lannigan, bubbling over, "interviewing the President, with me hat cocked over me ear! No, ye 'll never get the sea-salt out of me, Mary, not with patent medicine. But a corking good petty officer I 'll make, or there 'll be fun with the gun-crew. Do ye want to marry me two days from now, at nine o'clock in the morning?"

She was long in answering. She sat with folded hands, looking at the ground.

"You 're not even sure of being a petty officer?" she said, when she turned to him and he saw her eyes in the depths of the scarf and guessed that they were blue, like the governess's.

"I could n't swear the papers was in me pocket," he said, with a twinkle, thinking of the surprise in store for her; "but I think I could arrange it, if I wanted."

She was very still and thoughtful; she pulled the scarf farther over her brow.

"Will it be the next day after to-morrow, then?"

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he said. The moon was showing its pale warning over the housetops. She turned her back to it, and gazed deeply out of the scarf at him.

"You do think a lot of me," she said, as if it had been denied. "You 'd better come and take me away to-morrow, not the day after."

"Would n't I, though, if I could!" he said. "But, ye see, to-morrow I 'm off with the Lighthouse Board on inspection."

"You 'd better come to-morrow," she said.

"But, ye see, it 's orders, me girl," said the sailor. "But I 'll have it fixed for the day after to-morrow. Maybe I 'll have a surprise for ye," he added.

"You 'd better let the orders go," she said. "You 'd better let everything go, and come to-morrow."

"But ye would n't have me found wanting of me duty," he said gently, "on the day our lives begin. I 'm a soldier, dear; and when it says, 'Come!' sure, that 's what it means."

"But *he 'll* be back to-morrow noon," she said. "I know what he 'll say. I don't want to be there to hear him, with all his questions. Come to-morrow! What 's duty, what 's anything, if I want you!"

"Ye don't understand, dear," said Lannigan. "Duty 's everything—twice as much for the rank as for the file. Ye need n't be afraid of this man. Give him my name and address, if he wants it; but face his music, and let him have both ends of the truth. 'T will be good for him and good for you. 'T will help pass the time from now till Tuesday. Shall I come at nine, and have me first look at your sweet face, and be married at noon to ye?"

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At length he thought he felt submissiveness in her sigh.

"Come, if you still think I 'm worth it," she said. She took his head in her hands; the scarf fell away, but she was too near for him to see her eyes and what was glistening there. "I hope nothing bad will ever happen to you," she said softly and truly, "for there never was any one so good as you 'll be to your wife."

"Sure, Mary, I 'm anchored in the haven of joy!" he cried, seizing her hand and holding it against his forehead. "No wind that blows can reach me, dear. Till Tuesday, then—and me mother 's looking down from heaven on you this night. One look at your darling face now—"

But it was hidden too soon in the scarf; and with a pressure of his hand she had left him, and was hurrying over the pebbles of the path to where the light shone at the window by the doorway.

There never had been another such Tuesday morning in all time, he thought, when the day of duty was past, and he rose to the joyous chorus of his brother robins, and put himself into the modest new uniform of a quartermaster. He felt religious; he doubted whether he had been true enough to the faith of his mother to deserve the blessing that was coming to him. His friend Mike Shaughnessy had arranged it all with the priest across the river; and Danny Thimblow, and Haight the boatswain, and half a dozen others who were at home in one church as much as in another, would be waiting there, each one the contributor of a loan for the lining of Lannigan's pocket. He had parted with some of the money to two "tired" men

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before he was fairly on his way to Mary's house. He felt in love and pity with all the world. And his heart swelled as he thought of the governess, looking out somewhere upon this morning with feelings in such melancholy contrast to his own. Speed the man who was worthy to please her; and if Lannigan ever met her again, he knew just what he would say to show how he had forgotten the night at the wall.

He dropped a batch of letters into the box—promises to send photographs of himself and his Mary to friends in distant parts of the world. Then he turned down the street which ended at the old house where Mary Travers served. There was a quiet gleam in his eye: she would see the uniform and half guess his promotion; but she would ask the question in a flash, and there was something exquisite in that he would now see her face for the first time, and see it smiling with pleasure at his having achieved what she desired most of all things. He discovered that in his dreams she had come to have all the beauty of the governess; and he suddenly warned himself that he must not expect so much. She would not be so handsome as the governess, in one way, but she would be in another; for her heart and soul would shine in her face to him.

It was a keen moment, almost too keen, when he rang the bell and looked through the long panes of glass beside the door; and it was rather a relief to see, not a young woman coming, but an old lady. She peered seriously at him for some moments through the glass before she turned the latch. This, then, had been made a day of privilege for Mary, and she would

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be prinking up-stairs. The old lady stood regarding him with solemn questioning.

"Will you tell Mary Travers there 's a naval officer to see her, ma'am?" said Lannigan, in a voice he knew would reach the upper stories.

"Will you come in?" said the old lady, after a moment's pause. She led the way to the drawing-room. Her manner left him in doubt as to whether she was inconvenienced by the loss of Mary Travers or generously solicitous for her, and about to cross-examine him concerning his history and character. "Is your name Lannigan?" she asked, with her eyes fixed on him, yet hardly at ease.

"It is, ma'am," he said, with his broad smile. "Ye 'll agree I 'm the most fortunate man in the world to-day."

"If I understand what has happened, I *will* agree," said the old lady, with some force. "Had you known Mary Travers long?"

"I 've known Mary Travers well, ma'am," said Lannigan. "And that 's often a good deal better than long."

There was something the old lady was trying to read in his face and could not. In a moment she broke out painfully:

"Then, if you 've known her so well, can you explain to me what she 's done?"

"I think I see, ma'am," said Lannigan, with quick sympathy. "Mary has n't talked enough." He looked to the door. Doubtless the girl was listening at the head of the stairs, but he would say what he thought. "Mary 's all right, ye know, at the heart;

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but she don't always understand that she ought to speak out a little straighter. She 's gone the way her heart pointed—that 's all; I know that 's true," he said, with proud dignity. "And no matter who it hurts, ye would n't ask any girl to do different, would ye, ma'am?"

The old lady could not frown through the mystery that confronted her in his face. She looked away and shook her head.

"If you tell me that, I ought to believe it," she said, pressing her thin lips. "But I don't believe it," she followed, with conviction. Her eyes filled. "I took Mary Travers when she was a little girl," she said. "Considering what I 've been to her, she might have treated me differently—she might have told me about this."

Lannigan nodded gravely. Mary had been wrong; Mary should have been more straightforward, and it was his duty to demand that she should be—his duty as the one who loved her most.

"I understand, ma'am," he said. "Now, ye see I 've arranged to take the train in fifteen minutes from now. Let 's call Mary down here. I 'll tell her she 's got to make a clean breast of it to you, from beginning to end. You 've been her best friend, ma'am—and she ought never to forget that."

He rose and looked suggestively toward the door. The old lady had followed him with strained attention, still baffled. Then she spoke.

"I did n't tell you," she said. "They did n't come back here."

He looked, startled, into her dim, set eyes.

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"They did n't come back here?" he said. He glanced around the room. The old lady stared at him still painfully, still incomprehensively, but without speaking. The house was silent and empty.

"They did n't come back here?" he heard himself repeating. He stared back at her; the pictures on the wall seemed to whirl about the center where, half frightened and half stupid, she sat motionless.

"They have n't even left an address," she said.

"Oh!" he said colorlessly.

"She married him yesterday," said the old lady. "She said it was to keep her promise. I know she never cared for him. It 's her ambition," said the old lady, choking. "She has n't been fair—to him or me, or to—"

She looked at Lannigan inquiringly.

"STAND by, there!" growled the launch-captain. Lannigan brought the nose of the launch to the landing with his boat-hook. The captain handed the beautiful one ashore. She smiled and passed under the electric light, in her silks and snowy gloves, carrying a bunch of lilacs. For an instant her eyes met Lannigan's. If they remembered him, if they recognized him, there was not a quiver of a muscle about her mouth.

"And that was the governess," said Lannigan to himself. "Aye, handsome she was; and the smell of them lilacs! I wonder if she knows what become of Mary Travers—poor Mary dear, that married the other man because she 'd promised him!"

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HELP FROM THE HOPELESS

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HELP FROM THE HOPELESS

CAN see meself a-stalking round the bend, with me face the color of lead and me fists like iron balls, praying sulphur flames for some strong man to beat the Satan out of me. But they stood at the door of the church and they smiled in their cotton gloves, each with his boots a-dazzle and a posy in his coat. And they saw me coming down the slope with the world blowed clear to smithereens and the set of me jaw like death; but their hides was thick as crocodiles. And Finny Sudbury he blurted out with:

"Where 's the bride?"

"Where *is* the bride?" says Hennessy. "Have ye changed your mind—and the parson asleep on his book inside and the violets lost their smell? Where *is* the bride?"

"Bride! There 'll be no bride," says I, with a jerk at the swinging door. "There 'll be no bride," says I, to the lights a-streaming on the pews. "Ye blithering idiots," says I, defending them from the church like the divil himself, "go back to your ships, and never come ashore where women are."

"Why," says the Portegee, with his grin, "she 's give him the mitten!" And he winked to the rest;

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but 't was me they saw, and they closed him round and hustled him quick away. "We ain't got nothing more to say," says the nigger Jones; "and we 're going right back to the ship," he says, throwing his posy down in the dust. They opened apart for me to pass —the church and the grass a white-green streak a-swirling round me. I tried to speak a decent word; but me lungs was filled to bursting. The parson put his head to the crack of the door, and I shook me fist at his nose; and what he heard me say was: "Damn the female kind!"—that young I was.

I cut a wake through the sprouting fields. The farmers' wives bawled out to me; their children run as though they 'd seen the bogy-man. But I did n't know where I was bound, nor I did n't care. Straight before the wind I stalked, through woods and swamps till the sun swung round to afternoon. And every hour my grief and rage went double with thinking. Till I stood 'twixt the wind and the sea, and I had to stop; but I would not turn; and I give a groan like a passing soul for something horrible, out of sea or land, that I could prove meself a man ag'in, though it made an end of me. But there was nothing. Only a big and brawny man was all I saw, sitting on a rock and staring over the surf. His face was hard and set as mine, and a minute I stood in front of him and blocked his view. But he would not speak nor look at me. I give a laugh and paced the sand, thinking of Mary Travers, always of Mary Travers. But the sea, I said, should never mock and stop me as the woman had. For here sails a fisherman hugging the lee of the bluff.

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"That wash-tub you 're floating in," says I, "what buys it?"

"You 're joking," says he, "for this sloop is cheap at all the money you 've got."

"It ain't worth the breeze to blow it to the boneyard," says I; "but here 's the lining of me pockets."

He got ashore and grabbed my money and made for the bank above the strand. "Ye 'd best keep out of a gale with her," says he, with his thumb at the white-caps. "She needs a bit of calking," he says, with a grin, moving away, "and maybe some planking here and there. She won't stand up ag'in' this gale with that rotten pole, ye know," he says, edging his way to safety. I stood up in her leaky bottom and hurled her scrap of an anchor at his head—if it hit him I never knowed. "For it 's Nick for a pilot and hell for a port," I sung in me hollow heart, "and never a whine from me!" I would keep on before the wind, says I to meself—split planks and splintered stick the merrier—till I found my medicine. And good-by to the land where Mary Travers trod, forever if need be. I jabbed an oar in the sand. Something held me from floating off. 'T was that brawny man that had sat on the rock and stared at the sea.

"Say, friend," says he.

"Holy Mother of God!" says I, "have you waked up to tell me what I 'll do? Shall I get out in the sand with you, or in the water, or underneath—oh, speak the word!" says I.

He was looking mild and firm apast me shoulder; and athwart his back I see a little harp was slung.

"What proof would we make with our fists?" says

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he. "If you want to know who 's afraid of death, take me in your boat. I 've heard it in your voice, you know," says he. "You 're going afloat in a sinking craft, and you don't care what nor where. For pity's sake take me along; for my port is the same as yours."

"What, ship with a poet and his harp?" says I. "Why, I 'd throw ye into the sea for one mistake in your grammar. Let go my rail!"

"I can't," says he, with his leg aboard. "There 's better room for two than one; and I will!"

I swore by the cloven toe, and I laid me hands in the pipe of his wind, till we found ourselves cross-clasped, me in my slippery bilge and him in the sand and water. And we neither could speak till by common consent.

"You 're afraid to sail in your leaky boat," says he, "and you don't want me to know it."

"I am?" says I. "There 's a rock out there behind the sky; and there 's where I 'll be to-night if this colander holds together. And there I 'll stay till the powers give answer to me troubles. I 'm thinking you 'd starve before the answer come."

"Nothing worse than starving?" says he. "You 'll leave me on that rock alone, if I wait for an answer to what troubles me. Oh, let me in!" says he.

"This craft is a rotten coffin," says I. "'T will split away in the gale to kingdom come, and that 'll be your answer."

"What, nothing worse than a drifting corpse?" says he. "Take me to steer and I 'll show the fear of God to you."

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"Lay for'ard, then," says I. "I 'm skipper here; and you 'll learn a new tune to your harp 'twixt now and ye touch dry land again."

"So bless your soul!" says he. He crouched ahold of the mast and set his eyes to the sea.

The gale mowed down the grass on the bluff and drove the spray athwart the swell and carried me and my leaky craft before it. "'T is the wind of Mary Travers's wish," says I, "and it says: 'Away with you, Sudd Lannigan—and never come back!'" But I looked no more behind. We cut a streak in the rolling surge, and the water bubbled through the seams and rose above my heels. But all I saw was a tree and a moon and the shape of Mary Travers in the gloom. I felt me arm around her waist and the touch of her hair across my cheek; and my love was hate and my hate was love, till I wanted to cry aloud: "How could ye, Mary Travers!" Aye, she was sailing a leakier craft than mine: for she did n't love him, and I knowed it, as I know it to this day.

The land growed gray at north and south; the sky closed down like the lid of a boiling pot and the water rose above the floor; but I made no move to bail. Away in the tossing spray I saw the ledge where I was bound, not five points off the wind or my mast would have snapped with laying for it. I remembered I had a passenger: he knelt with his little harp across his back, and never a stir nor a word.

"I 'm swinging my boom," says I.

"I hear," says he.

"Then maybe ye 'll learn to see," I snarled when the boom come round and tapped his head.

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"Maybe in the world to come," says he, still looking before him.

"Are ye blind?" I roared.

"Yes, this many a month," says he; "as blind as two blue stones."

"Oh, ye found your way to my gun'le quick enough," says I.

"By sense of sound," says he. "If the sun turned square I 'd never know."

"Then praise your luck," says I; "for it makes ye safe from seeing the female kind. And here you groan of being blind!"

"*Did* I groan for being blind?" says he. "But no woman could do me harm—if I had my eyes."

"Who never boasted the same?" says I. "But they 'll blow an honest man to the shape they please, like a bubble of glass; and let him cool in the turn of a night and drop to smithereens. For there never was a woman and a conscience sewed together," says I—that young I was. He turned his face away again, and give a sigh.

"'T is only that with you, then!" he says.

The man had no soul to him, I mutters: he was hungered a bit, and tired of twanging his harp for bread. And me, with my holy thoughts of Mary Travers—why, he laid that close to the ground he could n't understand. He felt the smooth water under the lee of the reef, and the gulls went screaming off and left us all alone 'twixt sky and water. "It 's the rock," he says, with a touch of a smile.

"Yes," says I; "and a gale of prayers won't blow ye back ashore in this old scow. Ye 'll think twice, maybe, before ye stow away in a sieve again."

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"Have you done with her? Are you going to take to the rock?" says he. "Then give her to me; give me the sheets and point her away to the sky-line."

"I 'm holding her nose," says I. "Now pick your way to the top of the reef."

"No; let me stay," he says. "You 've only got a trifle of mulligrubs; but I belong to the devil's dumping-ground, and my soul is overdue. You must!" he says, ahold of me.

"I must?" says I, all mad with the feel of anything that balked me. He tried to push me back, and I fetched his head with a cruel jar ag'in' the rail, and he rose all meek and trembling, the blood a-streaming down his face—a bigger, broader man than me made like a slave because he could n't see how I had come at him. I bit me lips with shame of meself when I saw him. He picked his way across the seaweed; he slipped and fell on the jagged rocks and made more rags in his clothes. But still he followed me, with his hands all raw from barnacles. Had Mary Travers sensed what a brute I could be? And that was why she 'd cut away from me—and me deserving it?

"Sit down," says I, all harsh with hate of meself, "and don't you claim to know what misery is when you sail with me—that 's all. Can't ye wipe the blood from your face?" says I, between me teeth. He makes no sound. He only untied the bag from his back and set his harp all naked in the wind. The gold of it doubled the gloom about us. He wiped his face with the bag, all patiently; and the wind went moaning through the strings of the harp, to a tune of evil fate. I felt like howling like a dog; and what did I do but burst in tears like a baby.

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He heard me sniffling, try as I might. "You 're young," he says, by and by. "I suppose you meant well enough. You are not a father yet?" he says, in a bit. "No son—and no woman tied to your neck to grind your heart against the stones!"

"I 'm not worth it," says I.

"And your conscience is clear of crime?" he says, all puzzling.

"I never did anything worse than strike a blind man," says I, like a girl.

He was still awhile; then he give a laugh. "And you call that misery!" says he. Some kind of a daylight ghost seemed to take it up on the harp and play it over and over again, to the moan of the whistling buoy that was warning everything away from us. I was learning then how far it is from a woman's kiss to a grim, gray rock in the sea.

"Bag that harp and tell me your yarn!" says I. "I ain't the ruffian you 've pictured in your mind. My heart is broke, that 's all, me friend; and what 's your yarn?"

"About me?" says the blind man. His two dead eyes stared over the blank of waters; but soon a weary smile come over his mouth.

"You 'll have me talking of little Davy—my boy," he says, half wistful; "and then I won't know how to stop. For I 'll think he 's here where I can touch my hand to his little face, and I 'll be a fool. Then I 'll wake up and remember what 's happened—that 's what you 'll bring me to." But he did n't stop. "It is twenty-four hours since I spoke his name to a soul," he says. "You 'll get me talking!" he warns, with a smile.

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"Begin with the woman," says I; "for that 's where the trouble begins."

"You 're young," says he, all grave; "and you think you can carry the world tied up in a phrase. You 're as young as I was five years ago. And maybe you can sing a song or crack a joke or give the general flavor to a rout as well as I could, and borrow from men and steal from girls. Can you see what kind of a boy I was? One day I got a call from the richest man in the town.

"'What business have *you* pursuing my daughter?' says he. 'She 's promised to a man that can take care of her,' says he; 'and I 'll not give her up to a variety show like you, with neither profession nor money.'

"'I need no sympathy,' says I, 'for I 've settled down. I 'm going to be a portrait-painter, and your daughter is going to be a portrait-painter's wife.'

"'Listen to this,' says he, all scarlet: 'my daughter may be your wife; but your wife will never be my daughter!'

"That 's how Laura and I come down from flowers and dances to live in the half of a New York flat—two rooms and a kerosene stove, and lift yourself upstairs. Maybe you can find a moral in that; but I can't. We were living on our pride," says the blind man; "and we had a baby boy, and I painted and painted every day as long as the light would last, and longer—until I 'd begun to learn how little I knew," says he; "and that was encouragement enough, if you have the spark of the artist in your soul. Was there any rhyme or reason in my falling sick, with seven kinds of ills, from drinking bad water? It was

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six months after that I sat up in bed one day and tried to sing with a broken voice to little Davy. 'Let 's have some light,' says I to the doctor. 'There 's a picture of purgatory I saw in my dreams. I 'll paint it and be famous.'

"'Blue glasses first,' says the doctor, 'and six months' rest for those eyes. And six months' rest for your wife, here, too; and entire freedom from care for both of you.'

"Another week and I was feeling my way along the street—happy, though the world was still so dim that it sometimes give my heart a jump. But I 'd had a couple of letters from ancient friends that stopped me from ever asking a loan again; and now it was a question of food and rent for the months to come, and I was out for a job that would n't hurt my eyes.

"'What can you do?' says the first man I asked.

"'Why, anything a gentleman can do,' says I. He looked at me over his glasses.

"'I don't believe you 'll find anything in New York a gentleman can do,' says he. 'Good morning.' I did n't fetch home any smiles for Laura that night. Three days later I brought myself to send my card to a man that had known my father; and when he asked what I could do, I said: 'Why, anything.' He went down the list of the trades he employed; but what did I know of any trade?

"'I don't see anything you can do,' says he, 'but sweeping out an office.'

"'Then give me a broom,' says I, with my heart shriveled down to a marble.

"'Clean the spare typewriter,' says he; 'it 's a reg-

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ular part of the job.' Then I sat for an hour and fumbled over the dirty types with a brush. 'Can't you see any better than that?' says he, stopping in a hurry. 'Those types are not clean,' says he. 'Well, maybe it 's my eyes,' says I; 'but they 'll be better soon.' He gave me a look that did n't raise my spirits. 'I 'd like to hold this job, sir,' says I, thinking of my baby at home; 'at least, till I can get a better one,' says I.

"'Come back when you can see to do the work,' says he. 'Good morning.'

"I did n't keep on hunting; I went home in the middle of the afternoon. I found my wife crying over a letter. Her father was dead, and she 'd never laid eyes on him since our marriage, nor heard from her telegram to him when her baby was born.

"'Never mind,' I said; 'I 've had some luck. I 've got a job to bide the time with—as soon as my eyes are a little better.'

"'What is it?' she said, all listless.

"I did n't like to tell her the truth. 'It 's with the typewriter,' I said.

"'You don't know typewriting,' said Laura.

"'I 'll learn it fast enough,' says I, 'when my eyes come back.' 'How much will you get?' says she. 'I don't know,' says I. 'I did n't think to ask.'

"'No! You did n't think to ask!' she cries, astounding me. 'Was that the way my father made a fortune, —selling his labor before he knew what he 'd get for it?'

"I felt my heart cut like a whip; there was that in Laura's voice I had never heard before; but I would n't show the hurt she 'd made. 'Never mind, dear,' I

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said. 'When I get my eyes again I 'll make the world pay double for setting us back like this. I 'm getting stronger every day.'

"I took up my baby and loved it and laughed with it till my heart growed warm again, though Laura would n't laugh at its tricks. The next morning I cut a page out of the newspaper—one I found, for we did n't waste our pennies. I pinned it on the wall and measured off ten paces, and took memorandum of how I could read the big letters of the advertisements, so as to have a gage on my eyes. That day I did n't search for any better job to take the place of the one that was waiting me; for I thought I 'd keep out of the glare of the sun on the snow. I only bided the time till another twenty-four hours, to see if I could read at eleven paces what I had made out at ten. But I could n't; I was n't so sure at ten paces as I 'd been the morning before. And I sat all day like a bird in its cage, without a word.

"'Are you giving up looking for a position?' said Laura, then, in that new voice of hers.

"'No, dear,' I said; 'I 'm only resting my eyes from the snow—so I can take that chance that 's offered me.'

"The next morning I stumbled off my ten paces and tried the newspaper again. Then I knew what was coming to me. I was going blind.

"She was there in the room—she had no other place to go; and so I could n't open my lips. The baby was crying because she 'd forgotten its food. I was going blind; and what was I going to do? What *did* blind men do? I said to myself. Some of 'em begged; some of 'em played bad music in the streets; and some of

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'em pitched themselves into the river, I guessed. The heat in my head made the room so steamy I could n't see the look on her face. I rushed to the window and threw it open; for the air seemed gone with the light. 'The baby!' says she. 'Do you want to kill him with the cold, and me, too—and get rid of your burden? Or are you crazy?'

"'Not yet,' says I, shutting down the window. 'Not yet,' says I. 'I was only thinking.'

"'Will thinking give your baby the food he needs, and the clothes?' she said.

"'Maybe it will, dear. Have patience, dear,' says I.

"Then I went out in the snow and tried to plan what I was going to do. By and by I come back: I knew my only course. I took up my harp and put my rusty fingers on the strings and tried to kill the gloom with something gay. Neither of us said a word; for she thought I was idling, and I found I 'd lost me grip of the thing, for I 'd never played it except for a joke. I must learn again, right away, I said to myself: I must practise and practise. The baby went to sleep. All the afternoon Laura lay in a chair, and I pulled at the strings with ever the same, same tune, trying to perfect myself. By and by she cried out like one in pain. 'Can't you—*can't* you stop that noise?' she said.

"'Yes, dear,' says I. 'I was only trying to amuse myself. I 'm waiting for my eyes to get well.'

"The next day and the next I tried to read that paper on the wall; I had to go a pace nearer—my eyes was giving away fast. But I could n't tell Laura yet I went off to the public hospital. The man pawed me

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over and said it all depended on my nerves; said I must rest, and stay in a dark room—and not to worry, he said. I went home and played hard on the harp. Laura come in with the baby and found me there, always working at my little finger.

"'Are you always going to amuse yourself on that harp?' she said. 'Nothing but play, when you ought to be hunting for work! Where shall we find our supper to-morrow?' she said, in a way I never thought to hear from her.

"'Laura,' says I, 'God knows where we 'll get it; for I 'm going blind. And better I should go blind than I see that look on your face again.' I sat down and covered my head in my arms. I thought she could n't stand hearing that I was blind; I thought in a minute she 'd come and lay her fingers on my brow. I waited, and the minutes went past, and I could n't hear her stir. By and by some fingers did come in my hair; but they were n't Laura's: they were little Davy's fingers; and he did n't say a word, but gave me his baby love, all warm and fresh. I turned my back to my wife; she sat with her chin in her hand. An hour went by; I kissed my child and took the little harp and started for the door.

"'Good heavens!' says she, all hoarse, 'have we come down to that? Are you going on the street to play that harp for money?' I did n't dare to answer square to the scorn and fear and misery in her voice. I could hear her breathing across the room.

"'I think I know where I can give some lessons on the harp, dear,' says I. 'I 'm going to see.'

"Then I went out in the cold. I said to myself it

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was time I grew a beard, so that no one would know me. And I studied the landmarks between my door and the elevated, against the time when I 'd have to sail in the dark. I rode to the jumping-off place in Brooklyn, and there I put my harp down in the snow in front of a saloon and played my tune. A man rolled out and gave me a quarter and wanted another tune; but I did n't know it. He wanted the tunes of the street. I moved to another place, and played my tune three times again; and a woman gave me a nickel, and a child offered me ten cents, but I could n't take that. It was late in the evening when I got back; and I had played that tune till it made me sick to hear it. When I had taken out my fare there was thirty cents left. I stumbled into the room in the dark. In a minute I laid my hand on Laura's shoulder, there in the chair, where I had left her.

"'I took down that paper from the wall,' she said. 'I found a notice of father's will. There 's nothing for us. I don't understand; there seems to be nothing left at all.'

"'Maybe he took his money with him,' says I. 'But does n't that tie us closer together? You 've lost your fortune and I 've lost my eyes. And I thought you 'd be thinking a little of *that* while I was gone. To *me* it 's a bit of a shock, you know. And a touch and a word would save me from going mad, perhaps.'

"'Oh, we 'll both go mad; there 's nothing to save us,' she said. 'I told you so before we were married. You should have passed me by, and I should have listened to my father and my aunt. Now I have to read

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such news as this, in the very paper you pinned on the wall.'

"I turned away. 'I wish *I* could read it!' was all I said. I paced up and down the room, weak and hungry. By and by she boiled an egg and made me eat it; but there was no more ease between us. She let the baby cry for water while she cleared the things. 'Davy,' says I, 'your mother says you should never have been born.' I flung myself on the bed beside him. He gave a sigh and put his arms around my neck and went to sleep—softer and sweeter, my God, than anything that ever trusted in man! That was the night that Davy and I got to know each other; that was the first bit of light that heaven let me have in all those days. I tried to keep awake for the joy of it; but by and by I went to sleep, and we did n't wake till daylight.

"I said I was going to give another lesson in Brooklyn. I left two nickels on the table and took three in my pocket; and that was my capital when that morning I begun to learn the business of playing music in the streets to meet the taste of the people. There 's many a trick in such a trade, and slowly I learned them; and in a while I was making food and rent. But what I brought home would n't get clothes, nor look out for accidents, nor tide bad weather. That 's why we had to part with a lot of our things and still went poorer and poorer. But Laura seemed to settle to it a bit, I thought. I think she was glad to see me when I came home at night. She 'd ask once in a while if there was no danger of my being run over in the street, or something about the people I gave lessons to. And I made

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a whole world of my own invention, so as to keep up the lie that I did give lessons and spent my time in the houses of people of our own kind. My joy was to get home and find little Davy. I was so blind now that I always whistled whenever I came into the room, for fear I 'd run over him. And by and by he learned to call back, 'Toot!' to me; and that was the first thing we would do when I came home tired—the one thing that saved the wreck of my heart in the summer and winter that came and went. He got so big and clever that he would steal up and hang around my neck whenever he saw me looking glum; and then I would play the harp to him—real music I would try to play to him; and in the spring he began to pull at the strings himself, and would play me a tune on one string—a funny little tune of his own that was always the same. Then I would put chords and variations to it, and Davy would laugh with delight. Till he used to give me more tunes, one or two strings in them; and these I would have on my mind all day, thinking how I would set them perhaps in a lullaby and play little Davy to sleep. Heavens! there were hours when I was happy—for I could n't see how ragged Laura was, nor how thin and miserable; and little Davy—bad and lusty and mischievous he was—he was the anchor for me. I said he was going to be a genius and play some day for kings and queens.

"It made me work nearer and nearer our part of town, so that I could get home quicker to Davy. My beard had changed my face so that none of my friends would know me. And I knew that Laura would n't be apt to bring her child to the Bowery. One wet day in the

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spring I was playing inside a Third Avenue saloon. It was a paying place. They won't let you play in every saloon—and they would n't always let me there. One thing and the next had brought me nearer to losing my grip that week than for many a month; and I 'd gone pretty light on my food so as to get some things for Davy. I was playing my tunes and trying to live down to the talk of the loafers at the bar. The door was open. One of the fellows said to me: 'Who 's your lady friend?' 'My lady friend?' says I. 'I don't have such.' Then there was a hush in the place; and when there 's a hush I always know there 's something going to happen to me. A woman came and laid her hand on my shoulder. 'Come home,' says Laura; 'for Davy's sake, come home!' There was an awful shudder in her voice; but she did n't say what was the matter. I hurried out after her, as fast as I could feel my way with my stick. Was Davy sick? Had he been hurt—had she let him get hurt? I said to myself. I 'm thinking I knocked a few other people's children over on the way home; for my ears was deaf with the rush of my blood.

"'How long since it 's come to this?' she said, when I opened the door.

"'Davy! What 's the matter?' I said. He came and gave me a thump in the nose and wriggled in my hands as sound as an eel. 'He 's all right,' I said.

"'*You*,' said my wife. 'You were playing like a beggar in that horrible saloon. People said you were low,' she said, with her voice as hard as if she was dressed in furs and I a criminal. 'People said you would sink rather than rise,' she said. 'You have the

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vulgar streak they said you had, or you 'd sooner starve!'

"'Then you 've brought me home to tell me I must starve,' said I. 'I 've been doing this for months. What else can I do?'

"She did n't answer—she could n't answer; she only moaned. 'I can't stand it!' she cried, after a while.

"Then I lost my balance. 'You 've got to stand it, unless you want me to jump in the bay,' I said. 'Would n't I do it quick enough if it was n't for Davy! Do you think it 's your love and devotion that keep my heart to the grindstone? You 're a coward,' I said. 'You may have come of better blood than mine, but what have you got to show for it? Why, your father was rich in money; but his heart was poorer than a pauper's, and so is yours!' That 's the kind of talk we 'd come to.

"She began to cry; and little Davy began to cry, too; and I—I could n't cry, and I had ten times the worst of it for being the man. By and by she spoke up in a meeker voice. 'Make what you like of it,' she said. 'We 've come to this, and I will follow you where you say. We must step farther down; we must go where the rent is cheaper. Lead the way and tell me what to do.'

"'Let 's not be cross,' I said. 'There 's one thing you could do. It would make twice as much money. No one would know you. It would keep us together more.'

"'What is it?' she said.

"'You 've a sweet little voice,' says I. 'The people

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here would look out for the baby in the evening. You could come along with me and sing in the evening while I played.'

"'Oh!' she burst. 'Would any other man but you have proposed such a thing? You could n't—you could n't if you 'd been made right!'

"'It 's not my proposal,' I said. 'It 's God's proposal. It 's the way the groove leads—the groove we can't climb out of, pride or anything. Put on a thick veil to cover your eyes and nose; be as blind as I, if you like. But they 'll listen to that voice of yours; they 'll give you money.'

"'You must let me try to get something else to do first,' she said, driven into a corner. 'It means leaving Davy if I go out to slave somewhere; and I do love Davy: but I 'll go!'

"'But what can you do?' I said.

"'In a shop, somewhere,' says Laura. 'I 've often thought of it. In the kind of a shop where I 'll never see any one I used to know.'

"Then Davy and I had a holiday. The little rascal could cut more monkey-shines to make a blind man laugh than ever a child before him. When Laura pushed open the door that evening Davy and I were having the devil's own racket with a dust-pan and a bandbox. 'You were meant for a pauper,' she said, throwing herself in the armchair. 'You 'd sing on the way to the poorhouse!' I did n't speak—not till I 'd got her to take some tea. 'So you did n't find anything?' I said, when Davy was in bed. 'No,' she said; 'I can't make as much as you bring home. And we could n't both leave Davy all day.'

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"'Not in this world,' said I. 'And so we 'll try the night-work.'

"'And I won't be insulted as I was to-day,' said Laura, after a while. 'For you 'll be always with me.'

"It had given her a betterment, I thought, to go and try for herself. Somehow I felt we both were happier. She made no joke of coming on the street with me that night; but she put on her veil and took my arm without a sigh. We kissed little Davy, asleep, and then we took the long walk down Fourteenth Street, near to Second Avenue. She gripped my arm tighter and tighter, but she walked on. It was a warm Saturday night and everybody lounging here and there. There was a little vacant space between two sets of steps where I unlimbered; and a crowd began to collect the minute we stopped. 'We 'll do well,' says I to her; 'and to-morrow you 'll get some of the things you need.' She shivered at the business way I went at it. I heard the shuffle of feet close in around us and felt her hand on my shoulder. 'Sing!' I said.

"She pulled her veil above her lips and started the song we 'd agreed on—no common street song, for she would n't have that, but a little ballad of long ago, that she used to sing as a girl. It was hard, mighty hard, the way she began: off the key; and the crowd laughed to break your heart. 'It was my mistake,' says I, in a hurry. 'Excuse me, miss,' says I; for, Heaven forgive me, I knew they 'd take better to a miss than to a missus. 'Excuse me, miss,' says I, 'but there 's such a jolly crew aboard the curb to-night that I fell off my key. Will you begin again with that

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French song, miss?' says I. I said it to get the crowd in a good humor; for I 'd long learned how to handle them. But you 'll understand, perhaps, how it hurt her to hear me talk so. It 's bad enough for a man like me to be driven into the streets with a harp; but it 's ten times as bad to be driven low enough to succeed there. And there was one man in the crowd that worried me by the way he talked. 'There, dear,' says he; 'you can't sing as pretty as you look; but go on, go on!' He moved around to get nearer her. 'Go on, Laura,' I said, vamping for her to begin.

"Then she started once more. 'T was hard enough to hear how her voice had gone dry from the old days, but she began off the key again; and the crowd sent up a howl that shivered down her arm and through my shoulder. 'Shut up, ye cattle!' says that drunken voice, pushing its way through the crowd. 'She 's my Annie,' says he; 'ain't ye, dear!' His voice seemed close in my ear, and I rose from my camp-stool. Laura give a cry. 'He 's touching me,' she said. 'Leave me alone!' There was a lot of confusion and voices—I don't know what; but I reached for Laura, and my hand came down on an arm stretched out before her face. Aye, but there was forty months of cruel suffering and self-forbearance let loose from me while I hammered that poor devil's head on the curb. When they pulled us apart there was a terrible crowd. I was being bundled into a patrol-wagon, and the man I had hurt was lifted in beside me, insensible. I kept calling for Laura, but I got no answer. I 'd have felt good that minute if I could have only known where she had gone—for I thought I 'd given my evil fate a

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bit of a punishing. But the moment we drove off I heard that same brute voice again—not from the man that lay beside me, but from the middle of the crowd around the wheels. 'He was after me,' says the voice, with a chuckle, 'and he struck the wrong man!'

"They held on to me that night and over Sunday, along with thieves and drunks. I could have stood it if I 'd only heard from Laura. I gave my last quarter to a messenger-boy; but he came back and said she was n't there to take my note. He 'd never gone near the place, I made up my mind. I could n't but think about Davy—whether something had happened to Laura and she had n't got home—little Davy waking in the night and finding himself alone! They put me through the machine on Monday morning. I had thought sure to see Laura then; but she did n't come. I told the judge my story straight, never daring to conceal that she was my wife, singing in the streets for the first time. The man I had hurt was there, and his head too sore to forgive me; but the man that had started it all was no more there than Laura. The judge was on my side. He fined me a dollar and costs; and some one in the crowd paid the money—I don't know who; I only suspect. But it had made a rustle with the newspaper reporters. I could hear my name and Laura's running off their pencils. One of them followed me out of court, but I would n't answer him. I knew he was following me home; but I could n't wait to see Davy. Davy was just the one comfort I had left; for Laura would never sing in the streets again, I was sure; and what else we could do I did n't know.

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"I burst in the door and gave my whistle; but I did n't hear any answer. 'Are you there?' I said. I got the echo of my voice. Of course, I said to myself, she 's taken him out for an airing; she did n't want to take him into court to see his father in the dock; and she could n't leave him here. I sat long and long, waiting for the sound of Davy's voice down-stairs. Then I said to myself I would open the trunk where his playthings belonged—many the price of a supper that I never ate had gone into those toys. I shuffled along the floor with a happy thought to kill the time. I would make him a church with a steeple out of his blocks. When I got to the window my foot struck the wall and not the trunk. Laura had moved the trunk, I said to myself. And where? I kicked my way around the narrow room. There was my trunk; but hers, with Davy's things—I raked the floor beneath the bed, I covered every foot of space, and could n't find it. Surely, Laura must have pawned it. But what had she done with Davy's blocks? I felt in my drawer. It was full of my things. Then I felt in his drawer. It was empty of everything; and so was his mother's. 'Empty!' I said aloud.

"'Empty!' said the room.

"I called up the man from down-stairs. 'Did my wife leave a note for me?' I said, quite matter-of-fact.

"'She sent her trunk away—that 's all I know,' he said. 'Then she and the boy drove off in a carriage with your friend that wears the silk hat.'

"'My friend that wears the silk hat!' I said.

"'You mean to say you don't know him?' says the man. I felt his eye on me, and I knew what the fool

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was thinking. I had to lie, for I don't know now who it was; I can only guess.

"'It 's her brother,' I said, though a brother she never had. 'I 'm smiling at his wearing a silk hat—that 's all.' Then I shut the door on him.

"I threw up the windows to let in the air. The world was going on just the same outside. Laura had gone. She 'd never come back. And she had taken my Davy—my flesh and blood and soul. I sat alone in that room that had rung so often to little Davy's laugh. How could the walls be so dead? I asked myself. I was all alone. And I had found out what it was to be blind."

THE wind had tired out and left the sea like a floor. Over your head the sky was a dull blue-black, with never a star written there; and away on the dividing-line three streaks of orange cut the clouds to tell where the sun had gone. The blind man sat all still and stone 'twixt me and the light of the west, like the world had passed beyond him and left him dead. "Women—women!" I says to meself, all young. Then I throwed a pebble in the water. "What do ye think to do now?" says I.

"What does He think to do?" says the blind man, pointing up. "There must be an answer why they took away my eyes and took away my Davy. Or else 't would be too foolish, you know. I 'm waiting till my answer comes."

In a minute he heard me aboard the sloop, bailing hard with me cap.

"My name was Horace Malden," says he, "and

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this was the second day of May. And I wish you a happy life."

"I 'm going to bring ye ashore," says I, "if these planks will hold together."

In the instant he sprung to his feet and stood on the highest rock, with a pair of heavy stones in his hands.

"Tell 'em I was the bigger man," he says; "tell 'em I said my Maker had turned my face to the dark—that you had to leave me here for fear of my killing you. For I 'll never leave this spot but by a miracle."

I come and stood beyond his reach. "There 's some one else that has a say in this," says I. "It ain't I, and it ain't your wife, and it ain't you. But the voice of little Davy is truer than yours or mine. And he 's making me say it for him—because he 's too little to speak for himself—that he wants ye to come back and stick to him, and teach him to stick to you."

"You speak with the voice of the divil," says the man, all white. "You 're trying to use my weakness; but you can't, for I 'll never budge. I was the dead weight that held them down to starving. She was right: her relations will make him rich. And I 'm done and gone and out of the way. Push off and leave me be!" he says, all feard of himself.

"He 's going to grow up a coward," says I. "Little Davy, with his twinkling legs—and the dust-pan and the bandbox. He 's saying 'Toot!' now, and listening for his daddy's whistle on the stairs. And would n't he fight me if he was here and I laid a hand on ye! But he 's going to grow up a coward,"

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says I, "because he 'll never learn to stick by the luck that goes in his blood."

The stones was loosening in his hands. "Oh, my little Davy boy!" he speaks up out of his heart.

"Davy—waiting at the top of the stairs," says I. "And they won't tell him why—he 'll never know why."

The stones fell out of his hands and he covered his face. "You 've robbed him," he says; "you 've robbed him of all they 'd have done for him, because I 'm so weak I can't withstand."

So I got him into the sloop. "Bail," says I, giving him his hat. We pointed away for nearer land than where we started from; and, though the breeze was all I wanted for my shivery pole, we leaked faster than we sailed. I had me mind on where Davy's mother might have gone, and how to hunt her up. But for the blind man the time was long, and he got a-thinking again, and I knowed his hat hung loose in his hand.

"Bail!" says I, in the dark, with the water in me boots.

"I 've been bailing," he says, "nothing but bailing, all these months. But it was n't any good, and it won't be any good."

"Bail!" says I.

He thought we would sink if he stopped. He throwed his hat away on the water and laid his head on the rail. Slow and steady we put the reef behind us. He did n't hear me drop astern and trail along in the wake. By and by the beacon-lights growed big and near. And all the while I 'd been thinking of little Davy.

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The man was easy prey to the food and drink I gave him ashore. "Curse your good intentions!" he says, half tipsy in his bed. Then he fell asleep.

At midnight I was sitting on a bench in Washington Square. I had taken the express to town, and found the newspaper with the tale of the blind man's shindy, and found his lodgings and the man that had taken her trunk; and I was camped in front of the house where the trunk had been moved to. And what with the whisky that me conscience had allowed aboard me to balance the water in me boots, and the general satisfaction I had to be thinking that little Davy was where I could find him in the morning, I fell asleep, with me last ten-dollar bill stowed away in me cap. Before morning I felt some thief going through me pockets; but I would n't swap me snooze for the pleasure of spoiling his fun. I waked with the sun in me eyes. There was a strange feeling in me heart, like the bruise of a hurt. Was it hunger? I said to meself. I held up one of them night-owl restaurant-wagons and made a breakfast. Then I killed time with me pipe and the policeman on the beat.

When I asked for Mrs. Malden they let me into a room that smelt of violets and had a polished floor and high-priced gimcracks on the tables. A man in a sandy mustache come down the stairs, and a youngish woman with faded clothes and faded eyes.

"Is this a newspaper reporter?" says she to the sandy hair.

"I come to get little Davy and take him to his father," I answered for meself.

"You know that this house belongs to Mr. Delaroy's

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sister, then?" says she, meaning the man with the sandy mustache. "And that I 'm staying here with her?"

I would n't let her have the satisfaction I knowed was due her, for the two of 'em give me too much of a chill; and I only says:

"I 'd like to take little Davy on the nine-o'clock train."

"What 's the use?" says Delaroy. "Mr. Malden surely knows the situation. You see," says he, "I 'm the executor of the will."

"Of the will of God?" says I. "When it comes to that," says I to her, "I 'm a bit of a lawyer meself. Ye can't tear that boy away from his father—not unless ye want to be singing out of tune with your husband again, and that in the courts, with your maiden name in the papers."

She went to the window and put her head beyond the curtains. Delaroy looked from me to her and give a sigh. The only sound that was made was a pair of small shoes on the stairs—one foot, one foot, hurrying down. I saw a little smile between the balusters, all happy and full of hope. "Daddy?" says little Davy. No one spoke, but I put out me hand. He pattered down the rest of the stairs. "Daddy!" he says, running into the room and looking all around. Delaroy and his mother was looking away from him. He come and looked up at me face, his eyes all frowning. "*Where* is my daddy?" he says to me. I rubbed me hand over me hair and aimed a sickly smile at the other two. But they would n't see it. Then I felt the profanity rising in

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me throat, but I swallowed it; and I says, all hard and soft together:

"I come to take ye to see your daddy, little man. And you 're going right away."

His mother turned to me as if to speak; but she did n't. She come up ag'in' little Davy's shout of joy. Then I caught her looking hard at the face of me—to see what I thought of her.

"You 'll go," says she to Delaroy, "and bring him back to-night?"

I did n't say anything to that. I took little Davy's hand, and Delaroy put on his silk hat, and we all went down the steps.

"*Why* did my daddy go away?" says Davy, in the train, with his eyes all wide and serious.

"Why, there was a poor sailorman," says I, "that was left all alone on a rock in the sea. And the poor sailorman did n't know what to do. And, sure, I don't know what he would have done; but your daddy went out in a boat and brought him back all safe and sound," says I.

He set a long time with his fingers round me thumb, thinking hard.

"But *why* did n't my daddy say good-by to me?" says he.

"He 'll say hello quick enough," says I, pointing up to the window where I 'd left the blind man the night before. Davy's legs begun to kick while I carried him out of the car; and when I put him down he run off like a wind-up toy, shouting: "Daddy! Daddy!" He made for the stairs, and stamped up, shouting: "Daddy! Daddy, I come in the choo-choo car!" till

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the whole house was raised; and "Daddy! Daddy!" I heard, till a door burst open and a voice all choked says: "Davy, boy!" in a way that was worth your wedding-ring to hear.

"Man," says his father, putting out his hand to what he thought was me, "I have n't the words to tell you what I—"

"I 'm Delaroy," says the lawyer, taking the hand.

The blind man drew himself ag'in' the wall, with his child on his arm.

"You were the man that could have taken better care of her than I 've been able to," says he. "How do you and I stand about her now?"

"She ought to have told you she was writing to me," says Delaroy. "It 's this: when you were sick your doctor was a life-insurance examiner. You got well, and then he made a report to his company, at your father-in-law's request," says he, like reading a brief. "And on that report the company accepted a paid-up risk on your life. The premium was paid by your father-in-law just before he died; and you can see that the policy is pretty large, for the premium took up about the whole of his fortune. So much for Davy and his mother if you should die," says the lawyer, looking at the big shoulders of the man. "Now your father-in-law was an officer of the insurance company; and there exists a verbal agreement between him and them, outside of the jurisdiction of the courts, I think," says he, "by which, in case you desert your wife, or allow her other grounds for a decree of separation, why, then the company, being honorable men, will pay back the entire premium to

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your wife, in exchange for the policy, which is in my possession.

"So there are two courses open to you," says he, summing up. "One is to act in such a manner that the court will allow the decree and thus make your son a rich woman's son and give him a splendid chance in the world. The other is for you to be blind" —here he stops and coughs—"I mean, to be oblivious—to your son's interests; to insist on Mrs. Malden's trying to escape starvation by singing songs in the streets to please the rowdies in the Bowery; and to keep on till you all three land up in the poorhouse or the hospital, according to chance."

The blind man stood ag'in' the wall, all pale. He cleared his throat, and he says, in a pretty fair voice: "Never mind the money. Who gets Davy? Who is Davy going to grow up with?"

"The courts would n't give him to you," says the lawyer. "Neither would his mother. And you—you don't mean to say you would have him spend his life in the gutter, in the places where you go! He 'll be educated and go to college and be a gentleman. And you—of course you 'll not be forgotten."

The boy hung close to his father's neck, looking from one to another of us, and looking frightened at his father's face. I ached with the grinding of me teeth.

"I want air here," says the blind man, putting out his hand.

Davy was ready to cry. "Daddy!" he whispers, pulling at his father's head.

The blind man begun to stroke the little one's hair

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as soft as if the child was dead. "I have n't any friends," says the man, half to himself. "I have n't anything but that harp. There 's going to be snow and cold and dirty streets and rowdy talk," he says to the child, drawing a terrible breath. "And sure," he says, laying his cheek ag'in' little Davy, "I don't know —I don't know whether I—" His voice stuck.

The boy was kissing and kissing his father's cheek, all hot with fear. "Daddy—I love you!" he says, all wild.

I got me jaws apart.

"By the kiss of the Virgin," says I, "he 'll never lack for a place while I 'm an able-bodied man. Don't ye see ye can't go wrong if ye steer by what your Maker planted in your heart? Stick to him—stick to him, man!" says I, shaking his shoulder. "He 'll grow up a man for it."

Delaroy give me a look, but he did n't speak. We watched the two ag'in' the wall. We saw the blind man straighten up like the storm was past. He give a soft kiss to his baby. He stowed the child on his other shoulder. Then says he:

"You 're right. If it had n't all come together, I think I 'd have said so sooner. Davy stays with me: not for my sake, but for his own."

WE saw Delaroy's silk hat climb into the train. Davy sat on his father's shoulder like a bird on a bough. I lit me pipe.

"Me friend," says I, "I can sit here and hear that baby singing like a robin. And yet I can grudge the rib that was stole from Adam. Let other fools go

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hunting: I 'll live me life without *my* rib; and *damn—"*

He come and put his hand on my head. He was smiling; and now he was handsome.

"My boy," says he, all soft, "if you can't forgive her, then you never loved her."

That was twenty years ago, by the gray hairs I saw in the glass this morning! Me and Clarence is going to the opera to-night; and the blind man will be there betwixt us, choking a pleasant sob. And me and Clarence will raise the roof with a pair of hands like clubs. For little Davy will come out, with his forty-two inch chest, and sing your soul to Paradise.

And I did forgive Mary Travers long ago.

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CLARENCE AT THE BALL

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CLARENCE AT THE BALL

IT was the ball of the Reverend Order of Wise Men, in Filbert Street. A chance acquaintance had sold me the tickets, saying he could n't pay his dues to the order and he was ashamed to be present, for fear of violence. So meself went disguised as the legs of Hamlet and the body of Robinson Crusoe; and little Clarence O'Shay went clad as a bird of paradise, with that many kaleidoscope feathers sewed on to him that he looked like an explosion in a paint-shop. But no sooner we come to the place where the Wise Men and Women was thronging to the ball than Clarence gets an attack of his bashful misgivings; and he holds on to the door and won't let me drag him inside. He says what was the use of him going to a ball, anyway? for, even if he could dance, why, no woman would ever allow it of him. He says that never any one in petticoats but always give a sniff at him and whispers "bandy-legs" or "brick-top" or "bullet-head," and then passes him by in the cold. "Women is only skin-deep, anyway; that 's *my* philosophy," says Clarence, in a loud voice. And he says a man can leave his heart and soul on the hat-rack, if he only comes into a girl's parlor with a stylish face. He says if some one

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would give a ball entire in the dark, why, then he would go: for he says that then the test would be the size of your boldness, and not the square yards of your beauty; and himself would bring off as many broken hearts by three o'clock in the morning as any of us spider-leg divils. And this he adverts with special reference to a tall man that stood dressed in the forked tail of Satan and would seem to be smiling contemptuous at Clarence from behind of his mask.

Till I had to explain to O'Shay that his countenance was fully suppressed by the false face he wore, and was n't his chances as equal as any one else's? And had he ever looked that handsome and unrecognizable in his life, says I, as he did to-night in the skin and visage of a bird? And I pretended to be taken down with a presentiment that here he was doomed to meet with the lady of his future love.

But when I slid him out on the waxy floor, with the jam of fancy dress and clatter of tongues and the glare of gas and two hundred ody-colognes contending with the air, it brought back the mournful bend to his mind. For he says, look at 'em all jabbering to each other; and we did n't know any one there; and if we did know her we would n't know her, for every girl Jill had her nose in a mask. Till I put it in his ear that if his wits was as brazen as he always claimed they would be when once dishandicapped of his face, why, let him dive in and pick out the mermaid that tickled his choice. But what he would grieve in reply was engulfed in the blare of the band. Clarence awoke to find me departed, and himself strayed and lost in a galloping waltz, knocked hither and yon like a nine-

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pin. He struck out for the wall like drownding; and at length he exudes from the cloud of heels and climbs up in a chair, as disturbed as an owl at a cat show.

Meself had gone off with an acquaintance I had made while stooping to pick up her handkerchief. 'T was an able dancer; but she suffered pitiful from thirst, such that 't was more than an hour before I took notice again of the bird of paradise. Bedad, there he was, cocked up in the same empty space, trying to look enjoyable—as though he would scorn to dance if ye begged of him, and had spent five dollars for his false face and feathers pure for observing the eccentricities of man. 'T was the height of a quadrille, and the only creature sitting down, save Clarence, was a girl I had noticed before, over forninst Clarence on the other side of the hall, and looking as stately and mortified as himself. She was dressed in a Moorish veil that covered her head entire, and a bracelet around her waist that dangled with countless ribbons and bells. I kept making signals for Clarence to run over and draw her fire, with an object of his closing in with her for the evening; and the man in the forked tail, which I now recalled I had seen with her on the stairs, kept nodding approval from opposite me in the quadrille. But Clarence protected his embarrassment by pretending not to see.

So after the quadrille the forked tail goes over and gets the lonely girl, and parades her jingling up and down before Clarence once or twice, then drops her into the chair next to Clarence and disappears in the crowd like a philanthropic man. So that in the course of some seconds Clarence got bold to look with the

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corner of his eye at what had happened beside him; and he judges from the make of her shoes that she was a likely girl—too likely to be likely to take up with such as him, he says. And while his glance was crawling up slow toward her veil the music broke out with a dizzy mazurka—when she pushed a bit for'ard as if to rise, and Clarence encounters her full in the face of the veil, with her eyes displaying the signal as plain as day: "If ye can hit a house ye can shoot me for this dance!" Till the red run down out of Clarence's hair in a sunburst of rapturous fright, and he tied up his feet in a knot round the rungs of his chair. The girl sat back with a bit of a sigh, though still gazing at him; and says Clarence, sure if he stirred a hand she would speak to him. Till with every one else all rearing and plunging to the dance, here sits the two of 'em like waxworks—alone in respect of sitting down together, and together in respect of sitting there alone.

"Why, ye bad little man," I whispers to him by and by, "this elegant girl has made up her mind that she'll dance with none but you at the ball!"

"Ye think she's taken such a fancy to me—as that?" says Clarence, trying not to laugh with pleasure.

"Sure," says I, inventing it all to inflate up his courage. "And if ye should mew in her ear I 'm thinking she would n't scratch—ye little lady-killer!"

"Lannigan," he whispers, shaking his fist, "if she speaks to me I 'm the man to answer back!"

I stood up in front of him and looked hard at the girl.

"I agree with your admiration," says I to him, aloud; "and of course your having disjointed your hip and

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can't dance this evening don't interfere with agreeable conversation at all. And of course," says I, "a mutual acquaintance begun at a ball will often lead to the most pleasant complications." If that would n't break the ice for 'em, I says to meself, then nothing but the police could force 'em to speak; and I faded from view.

But some forty minutes later I found meself staring, the same as the man in the forked tail, all puzzled, across the hall. For there, with her looking at him, side by side sits the girl and the bird of paradise, stuffed and mounted the same as before. And whether no word had yet passed between 'em, or whether each one had long ago reiterated all the sounds he knowed how to make and then fallen back on wireless telegraphy, neither me nor the divil would seem to divine. For it had happened that at first Clarence had declared to himself that he was in fact a bad little bird, and he would have a tale to tell on this girl when he saw me again. And he had begun once more looking at her feet, which from the color of her stockings he interpreted that her eyes was his favorite blue. And remembering that her head was wrapped up as choice as a Florida orange, he argues that she was as handsome as any girl at the ball; and perhaps, he says to himself, here was the lady of his fate, and him and her sitting and falling in love with each other! The idea made him turn spontaneous to look once more at her veil—when her eyes made a dart like a spider, and caught him that full in the face that Clarence uttered the most extensive blush of his life, and raised himself off his chair on his hands, in his shame. And there, with time rushing by, he hung on the knife-

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edge of three dilemmas: one being anxiety lest she would speak to him; and another being fear lest she would take no notice of him; and the sharpest of all being a terrible yearning to run from the place like an ostrich and bury his head in the sand.

Till now the divil walks over and looks for a minute at Clarence that close as if thinking to buy him, which begins to rile the little man; so that the divil only says, "Last dance before supper!" and walks off; and the girl begins to wake up as though something was about to happen. She begun pounding the waltz ag'in' her hand with her fan, which Clarence takes for a sign impending. He remembers he had forgot what it was he was going to answer if she should speak to him; and he heaves up a nervous sigh that contains all his feelings of hope and distress—when the girl, bedad, heaves up the mate to it, as if he had spoken first and she was answering back. And to drown his alarm Clarence begins humming the tune of the dance—when on the second bar the girl crowds in to hum it with him, and tosses her head as if to say "What next?" Then the band shut down; every one dove to the wall for a chair to blow off in; and Clarence thinks, sure in the middle of such confusion she will break through the ice and him be floundering in conversation with her. And such a crowd of broad-handed ballet-girls, circus-riders, and Lady Macbeths flopped down on her side, and such a hulking bunch of milkmaids, columbines, and Sleeping Beauties dropped down on his side, that they wedged him in like a scene in a horse-car, till the scent of her handkerchief went up to his nose like chloroform, and his heart darted north, east, and

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south like a mouse in a trap, till he thought he would die with expectations.

But the next minute some one down the hall raised the cry of supper; and the five hundred Wise Men and Women rushed in a panic for the door. In ten seconds here was Clarence and the girl alone in the empty hall like left by the tide.

The man in the forked tail had lingered in the corridor, with his chin in his hand. In a moment he comes slowly back, and says he to the girl:

"How ye doing?"

And the girl gives a quarter turn toward Clarence, then the half of a laugh, and says she:

"Who said I *was* doing?"

But the meaning of this was opaque to the divil, and the situation seeming delicate, he scratched his head,—for he had the way of a gentleman, though a villain at heart,—and says he:

"Ain't you two going in to supper?"

The girl gave a decent pause; but then, when Clarence still sits red and dumb and staring at his nose, she suddenly rips out a "No!" and jumps up and throws herself in a chair away from him. Till the divil rubs his shin ag'in' his leg, for he could n't make out for the life of him whether the girl was foaming because he would n't go away and leave her with the bird of paradise, or mad because Clarence had done nothing but camp on the ice. So he says to her:

"Well, then, why don't ye introduce your friend?"

"Why?" shrieks the girl. "Because I ain't made any friend!"

The divil gives a snort of complete distaste.

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"Then what good are ye?" he burst out. "If ye ain't made a friend to-night, then ye never will. Why, you could n't pick raspberries!" he blurts, with a glance of disdain at Clarence's feathers. And he stalks out the door.

Clarence sat broiling in his chair. A man, he mutters, that would speak like that to a beautiful young creature like this! His shoulders begun rising in knots, forgetting the girl herself—that sat with the struggle of forks and plates in her ears from afar. She must have been counting twenty; for up she jumps, throws down her fan and stamps on the remains, then jingles out into the corridor.

"Look here!" says her voice, like a rasp. "I 'm going home!"

"Then I would go home," says the voice of the divil, "and never come to a ball again!"

And with this Clarence hears her clatter down the stairs and out in the rain. The air was free of feminine presence now, and out waddles the bird of paradise, as bristling as a bantam and as bold as a hawk. He finds the divil at the top of the long, steep stairs, looking down in a rage at the swinging doors below. The divil turns quick around and says:

"Look here, me cockatoo, what intentions have ye with that lady?"

Then Clarence takes two steps for'ard, and leans up hard ag'in' the divil, and inquires if the divil was trying to push him down the stairs. And proceeding from this, Clarence must of course commit one of his rudenesses, such as was always filling me soul with shameful impropriety. I will not say what it was,

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any more than to hint that the two of 'em arrived at the bottom of the stairs in the most discourteous confusion, and that in the argument ensuing Clarence leaves the divil lying minus of his tail, and walks off without asking of his health.

"Ye cloud of disgrace!" says I to Clarence, next morning. "What harm did he mean?"

"What harm!" says Clarence. "Did n't he ruin me life? Would n't she like as not have spoke before morning? And here he shames her out of the place! When will I ever see the poor darling again?" he wails. "As handsome a girl as ever sit down in a chair!" he says. "And maybe erying her eyes out this minute—for we 'll never meet again this side of the grave!"

Till that afternoon Clarence saw a tall man come aboard of us and single him out from the crew.

"I 'm told your name is O'Shay," says the tall man, all solemn.

"Are you the divil—the one I was speaking to on the way down-stairs last night?" says Clarence, glassing it over with hope of hearing about the girl.

"Ye mean the gentleman in the costume of Satan, I suppose," says the tall man. "No. As to me, I 'm his lawyer. And as to himself, he is dead."

"Dead!" says Clarence, turning blue.

"Ye hove him in the chest with a cobblestone," says the lawyer, "and he died of a broken heart."

And of course in such circumstances, says the lawyer, the least that Clarence could do to avoid ill feeling, supposing of course he wished to spare the expense of being tried and hanged for his crime, was either to

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pay five thousand dollars obsequies to the widow, or else offer to marry her in exchange for the murder and kindly return the tail of the hired costume. And Clarence could have twenty-four hours to think it over.

Which he did think it over; for it got terrible on his mind. And he begun to waste away that bad that at evening I obtained leave with him, and we went up-town to discover whether the man was killed or not, and if the lawyer was not trying to obtain either money or marriage on false pretenses: for I suspected the lawyer to be the man behind the mask of the divil; but what was his use of a widow in his scheme I could n't divine. So I borrowed a Prince Albert coat and a stovepipe, which is ag'in' the navy regulations, and I tried to walk like a member of the bar, with Clarence towing behind like a gallows parade. The house was one of them Philadelphia brick living-bins that differ from the next ten thousand only by the number on the door. The lawyer opens to us in his carpet slippers, and apologizes for having no heat in the house, observing that he was an especial cold-blooded man. He looks at me paws, all engraved with tattooing, and at me citizen's togs, which was a few inches spare at the extremities; and I did n't seem to scare him much. He arranged me on a horsehair sofa, and Clarence dwindles down beside me on a chair. Then the lawyer cleared his throat, and I spoke.

"I understand," says I, "that there has been a slight contusion between me client, Mr. O'Shay, and your client, Mr. Smudd. We came," says I, "to bring back your client's tail," says I, holding it up, "and call it square without further animadversions."

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"I regret," says the lawyer, all in a minor key, "that the lesion between your client and the late Mr. Smudd cannot be healed by that yard and a half of red flannel. For not only was there assault, battery, and manslaughter, resulting in death, but your client went so far as to spread the entire proceedings with a canopy of libel and calumny. Now, to begin with, I assume," says he, with invidious coyness, "that 't would be somewhat inconvenient to your client to dangle by the neck till maybe he forgets his name?"

"Ye 'll pardon me," says I, "but the verdict is not yet tied round me client's neck. And I would first request that ye produce some of Mr. Smudd's remains. For at present we have nothing but a gentleman's word of honor—meaning yourself," says I, all polite—"to prove that Mr. Smudd is dead."

I had thought this would take a trick, but the lawyer only give a kindly smile.

"Ye don't think," says he, "that, out of respect for your client's feelings, we let Smudd lay here in the city, where the police would get hold of the matter! Why, the first thing he said himself, when he heard his heart was broke, was to have us send him across to New Jersey; for otherwise he feared that Mr. O'Shay would be brought into court. 'And I don't want him to pay for his terrible crime by hanging,' says Smudd. 'I would prefer he would marry me widow.'"

"Your words bring tears to me eyes," says I, with a smile; "but I still insist that ye prove that your client is dead."

"And I regret, then," says the lawyer, with a shrug,

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"that the only proof is involved with a coroner's jury and trying your client for murder."

The man sat that comfortable in his chair that I could see Clarence swinging in the jail-yard.

"Anyway," says I, "ye 'll have to prove that death was subsequent to the cobblestone. Now, beginning at the top of the stairs, what have ye to prove that death had not already ensued when the trouble commenced?"

"What did he say to ye rolling down the stairs?" says the lawyer, turning quick to Clarence, which had sunk to a spot on the haircloth.

"He says 'Dog!' to me," answers Clarence, with a husky per cent. of his voice. The blockhead would not understand my signal to make him keep still.

"And what did he say just as ye abutted ag'in' him with the cobblestone?" says the lawyer.

"He says more 'Dog!' to me," whispers the dunce.

"By which ye hope to prove that the corpse was alive when Clarence killed it," says I, in a rage. "In which case me defense will be insanity; for a man that will give himself away like that is a blithering fool and deserves to be hanged. But first," says I, bringing down me fist, "I insist on a private view of your client's remains. Otherwise I begin legal proceedings to-morrow morning; and the first thing ye know, I will file a caveat, come into court with a demurrer, and throw meself in escrow."

It looked like he was as good a lawyer as me; for he says, without a ripple, though the word "escrow" was as new to him as to me:

"I have anticipated each of those moves. I shall

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apply for an injunction ag'in' your caveat, cross-counter your demurrer with a writ of nolens volens; and if ye think ye can influence the jury by throwing fits in court," says he, "why, ye don't know the price of votes in Philadelphia."

I could see meself weeping at Clarence's grave. O'Shay looks up appealing out of his shoes to me. The lawyer turns to his desk.

"I will write one telegram to the coroner," says he; "and another to Mr. Smudd's remains—directing 'em to get on the first train from Atlantic City."

"Hold on!" says I. "'T is common law that ye can't shift a body from one State to another without a writ of habeas corpius. Produce your writ!"

But he never stops writing.

"I 've a drawerful of such writs," says he,—"both male and female." And we sits in silence, with the pen scratching the paper and Clarence's eyes turned up like a dying fish.

"Then," says I, "we accept your conclusions. Owing to financial fluctuations, me client can raise but fifteen dollars of the amount ye name as compensation. Fifteen dollars and the red flannel tail," says I, "and let it go at that!"

The lawyer give a sickly smile. "Not for a ton of red flannel tails," says he; and he takes up his pen.

"Then," says I, "Mr. O'Shay takes up with the other horn of your proposition, and offers to marry Mrs. Smudd. So be it. And I hope the engagement will prove a happy ending to last night's misunderstanding, which was entirely without malice aforethought, but merely Clarence overjudged the durability of her hus-

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band's ribs. And I 'm thinking," says I, in disgust, "that a man with a paper-mâché shell like that ought to wear a badge."

The lawyer gives a smile of great pleasure.

"Very well," says he. "Mr. O'Shay will offer Mrs. Smudd the satisfaction of a gentleman. I will not introduce him as the murderer of her husband, however, but merely as a common sailor; for I think 't would be more delicate for all concerned. And since time is all the money your client has, why, if he will kindly step into the back parlor and come out in ten minutes with Mrs. Smudd's hand, we will all drown the late unpleasantness in a small glass of bitters."

He slides back the door to the empty room like a spider, and waves for the fly to pass in. For a moment the little man stuck to the floor; and he swallowed his throat, blinking like a barber's scissors. I gave him me hand good-by.

"Clarence," says I, "was there anything ye wanted to say?"

"Only this," says Clarence, yanking at his cap: "if ye ever see that girl at the ball again, why, tell her I only done it to save me neck!"

He gives a couple of teary winks at the wall; then he shuffles across the threshold, and the door slides behind him and his doom.

Here he was, he says to himself, in for life with a woman he would n't know on the street. And good-by to that beautiful soul at the ball—maybe she would hear of his fate some day and shed a few tears down her Grecian nose in his memory. What a bad man he was, to have slain one of his kind! And what could ye

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expect, with the luck of his flaming hair? His soul froze up with the jingle of petticoats coming down the stairs in high-heel shoes. He backs off in the corner. A door swung open, and in, with a rattle of bells, veil and all, come the lonely girl of the ball.

"Is Mrs. Smudd you?" says Clarence, like to cry.

"Not any more," says the voice behind the veil. "Make yourself at home; for some one killed the brute last night with a cobblestone, and left me sitting in the hands of fate," says she, with expectation. And her having the veil on was only gladness for Clarence; for it seemed to soften the embarrassment of his joy.

"I think I have seen ye somewhere before," says Mrs. Smudd, to take up the slack in the conversation, "though not in the face."

At the same moment Clarence looked up and saw the unfortunate misperspective of his own face reflected in the mirror; and the hope of his heart sunk out of sight again. Now she did see his face; and would an angel like her take up with such as him? No; she would first let him hang!

"I suppose ye 'll be marrying soon," he broke out, with a cold perspiration.

"Not unless I 'm asked," says Mrs. Smudd, all firm.

"Some long-legged man with a straight nose!" says Clarence. "Of course, if anybody has a stylish countenance, never mind the rest."

"Is that how you look at it?" says Mrs. Smudd.

"Not at all," says Clarence. "With me beauty don't count. 'T is only the size of your heart that figures with me. That 's why I expect to die single,"

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says he, hearing the death-warrant being read in his cell.

"Ye mean it don't count if a person is ugly, so long as the heart beats the tune of true love?" says Mrs. Smudd, all soft.

"I do," says Clarence, shifting so not to get the taste of his face from the mirror. "That 's *my* philosophy," says he. "I could have been as handsome a man as ye like, if I wanted," says Clarence; "but 't was of her own free will that me mother married a plain-featured man. I 'm thinking she had more sense than the girls do now," he hints.

Mrs. Smudd hove a pleasurable sigh that floated him back to the evening before, and made him think of a mouth all milk and roses.

"Don't say that, Mr. O'Shay," says she, all pleading. "For ye speak the very words that are printed on me heart. Any other man would begin with telling me I was handsome; and if any one should pretend to love me on that account I would mistrust him—I would sure mistrust him!" she murmurs. "Mr. O'Shay," says she, "I never hoped to meet with any one like you! Dear me," says she, "it 's shocking how the clock goes round!" She throws an eye at the time. Behind the door the lawyer looks at me and coughs. Clarence gathers himself to take the ditch or fall in the mire.

"Then, Mrs. Smudd," says he, "I would like to say—could ye find it convenient—to do me the honor to be—to—?" says Clarence, trying to rest in the middle of the jump.

"To be your wife?" utters Mrs. Smudd.

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A blush like the red flannel tail run down out of Clarence's hair, and his eyes tried to hide in the back of his head; then, as faint as the end of a speaking-tube, he whispers: "Yes!"

He heard her sit down on the arm of his chair.

"Then I suppose ye 'll insist on me taking off me veil!" says she, in the middle of a long pause. "And ye swear ye mean all the sweet words ye said, dear?" says Mrs. Smudd.

"Yes," says Clarence, from a bit farther up the tube.

"Then," says Mrs. Smudd, with a laugh, "I suppose I will *have* to take off the veil—first!"

She begun removing pins and bric-à-brac from the veil; and it seemed to Clarence like every pin was a spike drawn out of his flesh and filled with sweet oil. For he was not to be hanged, but instead was to marry the beautiful belle of the ball, like the prince in the fairy-book. He gave a look around the room: there was divil a soul to see what would happen next. A terrible smile stretched his mouth. Mrs. Smudd gave a switch to her veil, and leaned over and looked down in his face. And Clarence fell back in his chair.

I 'VE heard of a frog-witted Frenchman that climbed all proud one night half-way to the top of a steeple, thinking 't was an angel awaiting to marry him there. Till sudden he finds himself face to face with a horrible gargoyle, looming over and grinning to him in the moon. And he slides all the way back to the churchyard, leaving his mind in the air. 'T was like this with Clarence O'Shay. And he did n't know yet

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of the evil old party she was, conniving to get herself down off the shelf by false pretenses. Oh, what a face she had! Ye could hear the tick of the clock.

"Are ye ill, dear?" says she, with her smile dissolving in doubt.

He sits a long time. Then he opens his eyes and scribbles a piece of paper.

"What 's this?" says she, aching to read it. But he only motions solemn to the door. She slides it open, with forty lines of hard suspicion on her face.

"Your friend," says she, having closed Clarence tight in the back parlor, "pretends to be taken with a spell." And ye could tell by the way her ears laid back that she was n't nigh done with him yet. I read what Clarence had written:

Let him bring on his habeas corpius.

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Then I opened the door and looked in. But all we could find of O'Shay was an open window and two little stars a-winking from the sky.

WHEN I came aboard at midnight here he was, stuffing himself with all he owned.

"It 's South America at daylight on that brig out there," he whispers. "But I think he killed *himself*, all the same!"

"Ye need n't desert the navy," says I. "For the lawyer was the divil in the forked tail, and she was his indisposable sister. She gave it all away in her rage."

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Then we went on deck to enjoy the peace of a pipeful.

"That face—I 'm going to sit up all night!" says Clarence, closing his eyes to the memory of it.

"But speaking of beauty," says I, "why, what of your philosophy?"

"Me philosophy!" says Clarence, exuding the word in the air with his smoke. "Me opinion of philosophy is henceforth to leave it alone. 'T is entire too apt to blow up—with yourself on board."

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THE LANNIGAN SYSTEM WITH GIRLS

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THE LANNIGAN SYSTEM WITH GIRLS

HEN the seventy blue-jackets had tumbled into their second-class sleepers at Jersey City, bound for Mare Island, there had been a good deal of leave-taking; but no girl had crossed the river to hear any promises from Clarence O'Shay. Four days later, on the last slow grades of the Arizona mountains, when some one with a banjo had finished bawling through the tobacco-smoke:

Ev'ry nigger has a lady but me!

Clarence said:

"Some men can bag the women, and some men can't; and that 's the end of it."

"I don't say that a little sawed-off man like you would ever class in with Don Juan," said Lannigan, after a moment, "but you have no science and no system; and that 's why you sit all the time with the girl that has the wooden leg whenever you go to a ball."

"Oh, yes; and how many hand-painted hat-bands do *you* get sent through the mail?" said Clarence.

"Because I can walk Broadway without looking

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behind me," said Lannigan, "was I never a bit of a flier meself? I 've been that embroiled with a girl that I could neither sit, stand, nor run; neither lie, tell the truth, nor keep still. But you—you don't speak the female language."

"Well, what kind of a system?" said Clarence.

"Suppose my middle finger was a pretty young thing like peaches and cream," said Lannigan; "and suppose my stump of a left-hand thumb was Clarence O'Shay. You heave alongside before she knows it, and you open on her like this: 'You 're the finest girl I 've seen from here to Yokohama!'"

"And then have her say to me, 'Come off, little man! You 're giving me paper flowers!'"

"Most likely," said Lannigan; "but that 's only female language. It 's the same as though she said, 'I wish you meant that, Mr. O'Shay; but I 'm afraid you don't. With so much counterfeit money these days, we girls can't be too careful.' And then you say how it hurts you to be doubted, with her beauty gone to your heart like brandy; and you a lonely man, as trustful as a child; and how you 're longing for a happy home, with a canary-bird and a waxwork in the parlor."

"But what would I be doing with a happy home," said Clarence, "and me in China?"

"What does a woman care if a thing is true or not," said Lannigan, "if she finds a man that can make her believe it? You tell her it 's passing the rest of your days with her or drownding yourself to-morrow."

"Who 'd have the face to say that," said Clarence, "if he did n't mean it?"

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"That 's what she 'll think," said Lannigan.

"She 's more apt to give me the laugh, and say, 'Rubber gum-drops!'" said Clarence.

"Let her keep on saying it," said Lannigan. "All of a sudden you change your tactics. You begin to get mad because she doubts you. You drop your face and pick up your hat—"

Clarence sniffed. His mind traveled back to his last evening in Brooklyn. It was an affair of which he had not spoken to Lannigan, but Clarence blurted out:

"That 's just what I did do!"

"And what did she say?" said Lannigan, holding his pipe.

"I grabbed me cap, and I says, 'I 'm going,' I says. 'Do you know *where* I 'm going?' I says. 'I can't say I do,' says she. 'Well,' says I, 'I 'm going where me word is believed; I 'm going where me face-value is worth a little more than two beers on the dollar,' I says; 'and I 'm never coming back.' Then she gave me a smile—a smile!" said Clarence, hotly. "'Oh, is that where you 're going?' says she. 'Well, good night, Mr. O'Shay,' says she; 'and I 'm sorry you have so far to go.'"

O'Shay stuck his pipe in his mouth and produced a succession of clouds. Lannigan screened his face with a hand that seemed to be scratching his temple.

"If that 's what your system comes to," said Clarence, "you can have my stock in it."

"Never mind the system," said Lannigan; "the trouble was you. For you fell in love. And the devil himself, when in love with a woman, has nothing to

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do but to throw up his hands and sink; for then it is *she* that has worked the system on you."

THE next morning, when the dawn was changing colors on the Sierra in the Lower San Joaquin valley, the train with the extra sleepers at the rear stopped at a water-tank, where the train-crew assembled at a smoking axle of the tender. For several miles around there was no habitation. A maiden of heroic size, who kept brushing waves of fawn-colored hair from her forehead, galloped up astride of a pony, and walked him along the side of the cars away from the tank. But there were no fine ladies framed in the windows of the vestibuled platforms. She halted by the last car, where there was the least chance of a too-familiar word from a brakeman; and she sat musing, broad and straight in the saddle, with one bare forearm hiding in feminine roundness the ripple of muscles as hard as a man's.

"You 're the finest girl I ever seen from here to Yokohama," said a Gaelic voice.

She stared at a small, broad sailor, whose little blue eyes glanced past her face.

"And your beauty 's gone to me heart like brandy and peaches," he complained, shifting his glance to beyond her other side. He wore strange, flaring trousers, such as she had never seen before, and since it was going to be hot, he was in his gray undershirt, through which showed the dents and knots of very masculine arms and shoulders. The water of the morning wash glistened in his cropped hair.

"And me a lonely man, and trustful as a child,"

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he said bitterly; "and longing for a happy home, with a wax canary-bird in the parlor."

He talked not glibly, but with a diffidence which proved that these were his first words of the kind to a woman. He stooped to the road-bed, and made long choice of a stone, which he balanced on the rail.

"It 's cruel hard to be doubted," he muttered, with a hostile look at the pony. The solitary stone was eloquent to a heart of so much softer substance. The girl's mouth closed in a faint smile.

"Was you watching me all the time from the car-window?" she said.

"Of course I was," said Clarence, resentfully.

She, then, was not the only one to dream of a happy home. She gazed while he balanced another stone beside the first.

"I don't reckon you 'd like living up our way," she said, pulling the mane of the pony, which cocked its ears at the hiss of the loosened air-brakes. "It 's twenty miles from us to a store."

"All right," said Clarence, turning quickly to his car; "if me reputation is that shrunk with you, I 'll take it back on the train. But I like this place—that 's all."

"I did n't say I did n't believe you—not yet," said the girl. The brakes were set again, and Clarence let go of the hand-rail. "I was only saying that if you should live up there in the hills, why, you 'd get lonely," she finished, in feminine language.

"What, lonely with you!" said Clarence to the pony. "It 's passing the rest of me days with you or I 'll drownd meself—in drink." He sat down on

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the car-step, and saw that the girl's eyes were turned away and her color had come. As it subsided rather quickly, and she was about to speak, Clarence said sensitively:

"Me name 's Dennis Fogarty; and he never told a lie in his life."

"I was n't thinking that," said the girl, guiltily. "I reckon it 's only mean folks that suspect everybody else. I was thinking what a long time you must have been looking me over, in that car." She turned away. The smile on her face ended in a rich giggle. "You ain't very big, are you?" she said.

"When you get all the bad out of a man," said the Fogarty, "he ain't ever much bigger than me. Look at Napoleon."

"I hope it ain't that way with a girl," she said.

"Sure not," said Clarence, casting back along the rails as if through an empty past. "There ain't any bad in a girl, to begin with. I never seen one big enough to suit me till this morning before sunrise; but it don't do much good to say so."

He might have caught the answer of a swift glance and a smile. There was a freshness about the morning such as comes in few parts of the world. There was a vigor in the air that challenged the heart to bounding. The girl's feet swung in her stirrups while she searched in her pocket-book.

"That 's my name," she said, with some embarrassment, handing down her card. It was a thin, transparent piece of blue celluloid, on which was gilded, "Miss Missouri Pike."

"The finest name I ever seen from here to Yoko-

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hama," said the pupil of Lannigan, with rising confidence, returning the card.

"And you like this place so much that you just want to stay here and let the train go on without you?" said Missouri, with a frowning smile.

"Would me words mean anything else?" said Clarence, with no heed to the truth he spoke.

"Can you ride a horse, Mr. Fogarty?" said the girl, promptly, with busy imagination.

"Ask any one," said Clarence, hoping that some of his critics within the car had wakened and heard him. "I can ride him upside down, if ye like, like a fly on his belly. I mind once I was chased down a precipice by some wild Injuns—"

She had dismounted. A large hand proffered him the bridle, and while he wondered at the sudden smallness of the pony, a figure loomed above him which said:

"You ride, and I 'll walk."

"Oh, yes," said Clarence, his face thrown frankly back; "but, you see, then I 'd be missing my train."

Her transformation made him start.

"You ain't honest!" she said, so close that the rising sun was dark. "You don't mean what you said; and you *was* trying to make a fool of me, you little dwarf!"

"What, me—Mr. Fogarty?" said Clarence, not without anxiety. "It was only I wanted me kit from the baggage-car; and you talk to me like that!"

"Well, I thought you was taking me out for a walk," said Missouri; "and that 's what I would n't stand."

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"Of course not," said Clarence. "Who 'd blame you?"

"If any one tried false pretenses with me, I would n't need any brother," she said.

"No; you send him to me," said Clarence. "I 'll part his hair for him."

"There would n't be enough left," said the girl, darkly. Then she caught herself, and was sorry, and turned it off in playfulness. "Well, 'f you ain't afraid of him, you ride the pony up to the baggage-car; for they 'll be going soon."

To Clarence this suggested a neat and safe way by which their interview could be ended. He climbed up, and sat with the stirrups dangling below his toes.

"You 'll need the stirrups if the engine blows off," said Missouri. "After me on his back, he might forget you was there."

"Have no anxiety," said Clarence. "He 'll think he 's a stuffed ostrich if he gets gay with Fogarty. Walk along, me boy!"

Missouri moved away for a better view. O'Shay arranged himself after the manner of some equestrian statues. He wished for his cap and blouse, and that some one could admire him from the sleepers. "'T was the system done it," he chuckled, a hand on his knee and another on his hip. "And me not turning a hair!"

"Is that one of those blue-jackets?" said the engineer. He thrilled the far hills with a warning from the siren. "No," said the fireman; "it 's some one who thinks he can break in a colt."

The Fogarty had crumpled in the middle. A

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gasping, impossible scarlet sun went pounding on the mountain-tops; a girl called out with a locomotive's voice; the level plain stood up and embraced him. He extracted his face from the sand and the sand from his face, and eagerly ran westward.

"Where you going?" called Missouri.

"To me train," cried Clarence.

"Well, it ain't that way," she said, pointing to the north; "and it 's gone."

It was growing small, bearing away his sixty-nine comrades and the lieutenant. Clarence sat down, speaking half sea-talk and half sand.

"You made me miss me train," he said.

"But what did you want it so bad for?" said Missouri, gathering.

"Why, to get aboard of it. What else would I want it for—to play a tune on?" said Clarence.

She drowned his voice for him by a grasp of his ears.

"You *was* lying to me," she said between her teeth, while he rose, lest his ears should leave him. "You wanted to jump on that train and blow kisses at me. You pick a girl of your size, you little red frog! What can you say for yourself?"

Clarence stood suspended on his tiptoes. There was only one way to fly her glittering scrutiny.

"I don't know what you 're telling me," he shouted, with shut eyes, "for I can't hear through me nose. But it was not so much the baggage, of course; but only I wanted to say good-by to me friends—friends of a lifetime," he said compassionately, now that she let him down to his heels, "and they 'll never see me again."

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"Is that honest?" said the girl, with a painful frown. "Can't you tell the truth?" she urged.

"What else would it be?" said the Fogarty. "Did ye think I was speaking a piece?"

"Well, I wish I did n't have such a temper," said the girl, with tears in her eyes. "I *want* to be a lady. All I come down here for is to have a look at one, and see how she acts. I 'd treat every one just right if I could. You going to lay it up against me?" she asked.

"Sure not," said Clarence. "When does the next train go?"

"Why?" said the girl, with hard restraint.

"Only to send a last word to me poor old mother," said Clarence, quickly.

"Of course," said Missouri. "I expected it was something like that. I 'll bring down your letter myself in the morning, while you 're asleep. Here you go!"

She half lifted him into the saddle again. She pulled the bridle over the pony's head, and started, leading them toward the foot-hills. Clarence looked out over the great valley. He could not see another human being, nor even a fence. He was a warrior without a sword.

"Say, where are we going now?" he asked.

The girl's face was illumined from a deep new fire.

"We 're going to find father," she said.

A FADED house, some sheds rough-shingled, and a plot of shaggy grass were three boundaries of a space where trotting pigs and adolescent chicks were at

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school about a dusty wagon. On the uphill side there were smoky digger-pines and some tangled shrubs and buckeyes; on the downhill side were broad oaks, and bare brown meadows drunk dry by the sun; and in the picture's center stood Missouri's father, in blue overalls and bare feet. He was making as visible as he thought wise the suppression of a smile.

"Well, you did, did n't you?" he said closely, as Missouri led the whitened pony and its burden out from the pines to the rays of the setting sun. The starved Fogarty sat like wax in the hands of Fate.

"Did what?" said Missouri.

"Oh, what you said you 'd do some day," sang her father, lifting a young pig in his arms. He gave a second comprehensive look at Clarence. "Ain't much of it, is there?" he said.

"Ain't much of who?" said Missouri, barring his way.

Her father's little finger pointed, as if by accident, at the sailor on horseback, while his thumb pointed at the pig.

"Why, of this here," he said, with marked innocence. "It 's a runt, so far as I can see."

The corner of the house cut off the return of his tethered smile and his glance at the pony. All the pigs and all the fowls had disappeared at the sight of Missouri, and the pony hurried off with a loud slap on his quarter. Missouri spoke cheerfully of the rocking-chair on the porch and of the smell of good fried ham. Clarence heard the house begin to tremble with her rapid steps. He sat on a soap-box and lighted his pipe, which for hours had never grown cold

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in his pocket. But the taste of it made him ill. Cautiously the pigs and chickens brought back the former aspect of the place, while the shadow of the house climbed up the stalks of the opposite sunflowers. At length Missouri's father gravely came and pulled up a chopping-block, and gave Clarence a decent chance to speak.

"Well," said Pike, after a reasonable time, "of course her mother left her the house; but there won't be quite so much live stock, for half of that belongs to me."

Clarence stared at the blank sunflowers.

"Well," said her father, stroking his goatee, "I shall knock together some kind of a sentry-box to live in—big enough to make a casket when it 's laid on its side. I will say this for her," he continued: "as to work, she 'll set a pace to sink the cheeks of a Chinaman; and if you took sick, she 'd pull down a mountain to get you the right box of pills. But, likewise, when she blows up gusty, she 'd as lief bat your head off with a fence-rail as eat an apple; and I don't know what good it would do you to have her yelling over your remains the next minute."

"Would a train stop at that water-tank to-night?" said Clarence.

"Which way?" said her father.

"Any way," said Clarence.

"You mean so as to get to a preacher, I suppose. But she 'll ride you over to Hopeful Rise," said Pike, pointing farther toward the wilderness. Clarence felt an eye crawling down his profile, and then down over his short limbs to where it lingered on an itching toe;

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and a rooster stopped, with a leg poised in the air, and tried one eye on Clarence, and then the other, then looked inquiringly at Missouri's father.

"Well," said Pike, "even a hog can teach something. I 've learned to look pleasant and take whatever the Lord provides. And I reckon," he explained to the rooster, "that 's what it comes to with Missouri."

The rooster ran off, not because he was satisfied, but because Missouri, with her hair new coiled, had appeared at the door. Her gray divided skirts had given way to a spreading print of pink and white, all loudly starched. A short pink sash hung from her untrammeled waist, and her skin shone brown to the elbow, and white to where the biceps rose in little mounds through the openwork of her sleeve. At her throat was a large medallion of an old man with a long beard, and a gold chain hung from her shoulders to a pair of thick-lensed eye-glasses dangling at her breast. There was a shyness about her.

"Well, I reckon you 've about emptied mother's trunk," said her father. "What you got her gold eye-glasses for?" he asked, unmindful of her mute and angry protest. "They don't magnify," he added, with a glance at the little man on the soap-box. "What," he exclaimed, peering indoors at the supper-table, "all the old silver-plated silver! And ham *and* eggs! Well, if this don't bring back mother's funeral!"

"Will you sit there?" said Missouri to Clarence, with a fierce gesture.

"Napkins!" cried her father. "Why, I don't remember napkins after mother's funeral. Well, sir,"

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he said, seeking to pass a twinkle to Clarence's eye, "if I was addicted to fits, I reckon this would bring one on!"

Clarence heard Missouri's chair kicked back against the wall; and in a moment he knew that a plate was extended to her father, and that a dripping carving-knife was pointing toward the door. The father and daughter looked at each other, and then at Clarence, and then at each other. Clarence's eyes ran around the edges of his plate like anxious beetles; but it ended in her father's careless whistle on the porch.

By and by, when the ham was gone, and Clarence's mind was traveling the long trail back to the railroad, and he was able to take hope from the growing dusk, Missouri began:

"I noticed on the way up that you 're like me. You let out what you 've got to say; then you don't repeat it. I 'm going to be just as open-minded with you as you was with me this morning. I 've come to a conclusion. I don't think, Mr. Fogarty, that it pays to go too fast—on what can't be undone."

"Sure it don't," said Clarence.

"And people would save a life of trouble sometimes," she said keenly, "if they would look before they leap."

"Sure!" said Clarence.

"Now, I don't want to make you uncomfortable, Mr. Fogarty," she began gravely.

"Not a bit!" said Clarence; and it was pathetic to her how little he knew what was coming.

"But it comes to this: I ain't going to say yet whether I 'll marry you or not."

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"Oh, that 's all right," said Clarence. "Of course it would n't be like buying a dog, would it?"

"It ain't like anything else in the world," said Missouri. "It 's enough to make you shudder. It 's enough to make you lie awake all night. And so I 'm going to send you off now," she said firmly, standing up, "and—"

"I see," said Clarence, and everything else seemed to rise along with his tones. With the wagon he felt that he could be safe at a telegraph-office by midnight. "I suppose your father—" he began.

"I 'm going to send you off to have a smoke with him," said Missouri. "He 'll look after you. And whether I 'll marry you or not I sha'n't tell you till morning."

She saw in his face what made her add, with a touch on his shoulder: "I know it 's hard on you. Maybe it is on me. But morning will come, somehow. You would n't like me much if I was n't as square as you?"

And she sighed and hurried off; but the sigh was not unhappy. Clarence's feet dragged the floor. Then, with an impulse, closing the door behind him, he peeped out toward the pines and the trail. But there, cross-kneed on the wagon-seat, beside an empty plate, her father smoked his pipe. Until they slept there was nothing for Clarence to do but wait.

"Wagon belongs to me," said her father. "I can't be touched up here, by law. Was you ever married before? Well, it lasts a long time when you do," he said retrospectively, and not in the voice of wedding-bells. "It 's generally brought on by curiosity. Well, sir, that dent in the shed, there, is where she

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threw a wagon-wheel at a peddler that tried to talk her into a pair of stays."

"A lonely place like this is a good one to sleep in, I suppose?" said Clarence, pursuing his thoughts.

Her father's glance was not without suspicion. "I reckon you ain't seen the bulldog," he answered. "No; we don't ever feel nervous about losing the horses. I sleep in the room next to you, and I 'll tie the old dog under your window; so you need n't worry, either."

"Sure," said Clarence, warmly, "the poor dog need n't sit up all night for me. Lock him up in his box and let him enjoy himself."

But after Clarence had borrowed some tobacco and had smoked so long in the closed chamber that the candle-end was like a beacon in a fog, and the advertising chromos floated like misty dreams against the walls, and finally a snore had arisen from beyond the door, he swung the window softly on its hinge and looked down into the bitter face of the bulldog. The pines stood up still and silent in the starlight. Clarence decided that he could leap beyond the length of the dog's chain; then to make the best of it through the unknown hills. The dog sat purposefully pondering the geometry of this proposition, while Clarence tried to make a smile carry confidence through darkness, and drew himself erect upon the sill. Then they both observed that Missouri had passed the corner, and was pacing up and down, looking at the ground. As Clarence hastened to get back, she seemed to see him, and he dropped astride the sill, and the dog sniffed at a shoe that wished to be mo-

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tionless yet nonchalant. Now she paced back and forth in front of them, so magnified in the mountain gloom that Clarence seemed shrunk to a spider. Her path kept coming nearer, and the dog lay down.

"What 's stopping me," she said very deeply, "is whether it 's right for you. You 've been all over, and you 've got refined by foreign travel. But I was so ashamed of my size that I never even went to school, though I can read well enough; and I want to say we did have napkins at the time mother died. But if we should ever go away from here, you might be ashamed of me being so big, too."

"Sure not," said Clarence. "I 've a mind to go down this night and buy you a Chinee shawl," he suggested.

"I don't want any presents; you 'd get lost in the dark—it 's twenty miles. It ain't a time when presents can say what you feel. Though I know all your friends would be better dressed than me. When I see those fine ladies on the evening train sometimes, with their white hands, and their hair done up like fancy pie-crust, it makes me sick. They look as slick as fall deer; and I 'm so big and hard-handed that it makes me cry."

"I 'd get down and give comfort to ye," said Clarence, with feeling; "but if that dog would eat me leg, it might hurt your father's sleep."

"You 'd better stay there, then," said Missouri. "I don't always feel so bad. They 're slick, but they don't look so they could run a mile with a pint of water. And that 's where I get my comfort. Sometimes I just want to let down my hair, and take a

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pitchfork for a spear, and gallop and lift that pony right over the train, to make 'em stare. And then, there was never any horse made that was too ambitious for me. Did you ever hear of that girl Joan of Arc?"

"No," said Clarence; "I never stopped off in these parts before."

"Well, it was n't here; but never mind," said Missouri. "It is n't that, anyway," she said, after a pause. "It 's whether it 's right for you. You see, I 'm only eighteen. I guess I 'm a bit coltish. I don't know, but I 'm a little afraid it 's like a doll. I mean, if I wanted a doll and I found one it would n't make much difference what doll it was; I 'd mother it just the same, just because I wanted it so bad."

"Well, did you want a doll, then?" said Clarence, encouragingly, thinking of one that complained when pushed in the chest.

"That 's it; maybe I do," said the girl, with difficulty. "Maybe my soul 's just spilling over with want of something more to care for than that dog; and maybe if any man that looked clean and honest had come to me and said just those things you did, at just that time, why—how do I know but I 'd take pity on him just like I 'd found a doll? I wish I knew! Tell me honest what you think, Mr. Fogarty."

This was too far in the back of Lannigan's book for Clarence; and he kept still, astride of his window-sill.

"Maybe we ought to say good-by," she said in a lower voice. "Maybe we ought to end it here and now."

"Well, if you say so," said Clarence, throwing his leg over the sill, "and you 'll ask away the dog."

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"I don't say so," said Missouri. "I 've heard how it sounds, and it don't sound true. But it all scares me; it makes me shudder—like walking on a roof-tree—like I wanted tight hold of a hand to make me feel I was right."

She put her hands behind her and leaned in lonely fashion against the house.

"Like we was both wishing the same thing at the same time, and could n't help what happened. I wish I did n't have to think about it; the more I think, the dizzier it is. I reckon some men would try not to let me—not to give me time," said the girl, in the hands of Fate; "but I guess you 're right. I—I—" She hesitated, and then went on gravely: "There 's one thing, anyway, that I ought to have told you before, because you might come across him sometime. There was another man once; and I want you to have your say right now."

She turned and tried to see the effect of this, and was grateful for his silent waiting.

"He was bigger than me, even," she went on. "He had a black mustache and big white teeth, and he talked all the time. I reckon he turned my head. I want you to know that I let him kiss me. He thought he stole it, but he did n't," she said firmly; "I let him."

She paused; but Clarence would risk no comment yet.

"Then the next minute I hated him," she said, between her teeth. "It makes me almost cry, how I hated him. I knocked in some of his teeth, I guess. He went away before I was up the next morning. I hope he 's dead somewhere."

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She waited a long time, with the judgment hanging over her.

"You ain't going to lay that up against me?" she said at last. "I 've known girls that would n't have told. It was only once."

"Oh, that 's all right," said Clarence, safely.

"And you 'll never speak of it?" she asked.

"Never once," said Clarence.

Missouri sighed.

"He was n't like you," she smiled. She had come nearer to him; her hand was on the sill. "No," she said, with a little laugh, after a moment, her shoulder grazing his; "I guess you 're bashful, after all."

Clarence gripped the sill. He imagined her hurrying him off on the pony in the dark; he saw himself, by the light of dawn, at a parson's door; he saw himself standing before the Book, a vulgar frog beside a robust lily. He gasped.

"You said I was the finest you ever saw," she cried, holding him by the shoulder. "You said you 'd rather be with me than any one. You can't know how I was wishing and wishing for just that. It was sweet—oh, it was sweet, Dennis!"

She had lifted him from the sill. She had kissed him hard on his bristly jowl, and set him down on the ground. Then she had fled. He heard the kitchen door shut softly on the other side of the house, and the key turn. He looked at Missouri's bulldog, and the dog looked curiously at him for a moment. But Missouri had set the symbol on this man; the dog wagged its tail. Clarence took off his shoes. He put them on again in the shade of the pines, and ran fast through the darkness.

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WHEN the sun was rising past the mountain-tops again, a calm-eyed man with a shot-gun rode over one of the billows of the road where the foot-hills began to flatten toward the valley. He saw a head draw back into a clump of bushes, and he jogged his horse to where the head greeted him with a doubtful grin.

"You got business in these parts?" said he of the shot-gun.

"I was looking for a telegraph-office," said the head.

"Expect to find one in that poison-oak?" said the other. "What are you doing there?"

"I did n't know it was poison-oak," said the head. "It was only that some one is looking for me, I think, and I did n't want to be seen. If you see any one that looks like looking for me, I 'd be obliged if you would stop 'em and say you never seen me."

"What 's your name?" said the other.

"Clarence O'Shay," said the head.

"Have you got anything to prove it?"

"Sure," said Clarence. "Here 's me name carved on me knife-handle. And if you don't believe that, I 've a mole on me chin and a fouled anchor tattooed on me left arm."

The man of the gun-shot studied him.

"So you 're wanted somewhere?" he said.

"Well," said Clarence, scratching his chin, "that 's the impression I feel behind me."

"Well, I 'm the sheriff of this county," said the other. "You get out on the road."

"What 'll I do that for?" said Clarence, bristling up.

"Because you 'd rather do it than get a shirtful of buckshot," said the sheriff.

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Clarence looked into the barrel of the gun.

"They can have the law on me for what I done?" he said, with a terrible frown.

"You ought to have looked that up before you started in," said the sheriff. "Step along south."

At the top of one of the billows, Clarence stopped and looked at the sheriff. A girl on a pony, with her back to them, had just left a trail for the road.

"'T would be a very small favor if I stepped into that bush till this lady has gone," said Clarence, appealingly. But the girl looked back; and in a moment, pale and set, with a rawhide quirt in her hand, she halted before them, and looked never at Clarence, but with heavy lids at the sheriff.

"Do you know this man, Miss Pike?" said the sheriff. "Why does n't he want you to see him?"

Missouri winced, and her white face avoided the sheriff's glance.

"I guess that ain't anything to do with the sheriff," she said in a low voice.

"He can't explain himself. He says there 's some one looking for him. There 's a man wanted about his size," said the sheriff, "for taking what did n't belong to him."

"Did I take anything but what you gave me?" said Clarence, both sullen and perplexed.

A hot flush ran over the girl's face and left it more colorless than before.

"He says his name is Clarence O'Shay," said the sheriff. "Is that right?"

Missouri shrugged her shoulders.

"For all I know," she said.

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"Would you mind telling me what you know about him?" insisted the sheriff.

"He got left off the train yesterday. I took him home to supper. Father let him sleep in the house. This morning, when I got up," she said, clearing her throat, "he was gone."

"You could swear to that if you was called?" said the sheriff.

"Yes," said Missouri.

The sheriff looked from one to the other, and knitted his brows.

"Well," he said, "he did n't quite answer the description; and I 'll take your word for his alibi. I was going to say something about your being so generous to a stranger like that; but I don't guess I will, Miss Pike. Good morning. There 's nothing vicious about him, is there?"

Missouri's voice came through curling lips.

"Vicious!" she said. "I don't reckon there 's enough to him, inside or out, to make anything vicious from."

But she kept pace with Clarence's rapid walk when the sheriff had galloped off. Clarence left the road and hurried over the dry grass. The pony trotted up and stopped across his path. Clarence was sullen; his eyes were on the quirt. He was alone with her.

"You need n't think I 'm going to wear out a quirt on you," she said. "I only wanted to remind you to keep to your part of the world. If you 're a cook in some sailing-ship, as father says, you can make a living without seeing this valley again. I want to say good-by, and thank you. I guess I know a fool when

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I look in the mirror now. Why did n't you lay it on a little heavier? I 'd have had some kind of respect for you if you had. But you would n't be talking now to me—it would have been father; and your luck 's as good as mine that you did n't. But I guess I won't get mad at a sea-cook," she said, gripping the quirt, with a livid tension that took away her comeliness. "You go."

After she thought he was out of view he looked back at her, from where a growth of mountain-laurels crowned his head. The pony was nibbling at the stubble. Missouri was the one still figure in the landscape, with clasped hands and an arm across her eyes.

"BUT your face is all wrecked," said Lannigan. "Your eyes have the look of two lost prunes in a pudding. That 's no poison-oak."

"That was when I got to Stockton," said Clarence, "and still the taste of them words of hers was ringing in me mind. I chose out a stevedore bigger than her, with his fists larger than his head. I pulled his ear like rubber, and I says to him his heart was paste, and no wings to his soul; and the look of me face is what he says to me."

"But it done you good," said Lannigan. "And it does *me* good, ye little baboon! And I hope it 's done her good, too," he added softly.

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A YARN OF THE PEA-SOUP SEA

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A YARN OF THE PEA-SOUP SEA

IT 's a terrible wise fact for the women that none of 'em sail with the guns, but a worse misfortunate plan for a sailorman that divvle a woman he sees for the best two thirds of his days. That 's been my thinking more times than this. The poetry gets clean spilled out of your soul, and ye don't know what 's gone wrong: 't is the want of the soft voice of a woman to come along and paint the murder out of your heart with a smile.

I mind once when my three years' time was up on the China station. I could have sailed on the U.S.S. *Valley Forge*, with the flagship band playing "Hail, Columbia," and a hundred-foot homeward-bound pennant trailing to our stern. I ought to have danced at the thought of home. But I must have been fouled by the weather; for while the fleet was making transfers I goes as sullen as a dog-day, and I give out that I would n't stay in a craft where the first mate was a silly brother to Balaam's ass; and I took me money without waiting for me papers.

I wrapped me chop-dollars in a bandana handkerchief and dropped aboard of a flying junk that was to make up the river for Shanghai. She carried so

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many coolies that you felt like the second story of a Chinatown cellar; and the only way to dodge the odor of them was to go snoring off in the hot moonlight—for it was the middle of June and the thermometer at the mark of purgatory, with the air so soggy we steamed like a bag of pudding. In the middle of me dreams I waked up and missed me bandana, and, without much taking bearings, I fetched a clip in the jaw to the nearest Chinee. When I see him strike the water in a heap I knew the mistake I had made; for I had hit the one that had robbed me. The Chinee was flopping helpless astern of us, but the junk would not turn back; for the old skipper says that such would be ag'in' both the tide and the Chinee religion. And I see the thief sink down to the bottom sooner than part with me coin.

So I was beached at Shanghai with me pockets full of fists; and I found meself 'twixt chores and charity, whistling "Yankee Doodle," and calling meself unfit to clap the cymbals in a baboon's march. I loafed ag'in' a bale of silk, sneering at a Chinee light-draft gunboat that laid by the Bund, called the *Walking Chinaman*, though she never stirred. I says to meself there was heathens aboard of her paid for not lifting a hand except to their mouths—and me a-wishing to sell me soul for a yard of sausage! And I give a hollow laugh.

I noticed on her bridge a green-and-yeller Chinee a-taking me picture with a spy-glass. By and by he waggled his hand to me, inside down,—which in Chinee means, "Come here!"—and then he made full tilt ashore, smirking till I grinned at him back. For me

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gizzard so gaped for chow that I would not throw a cold eye at any one that had the look of a piece of silver in his breeches. This was a classical Chinee dude; ye could have picked enough off him with a gaff to pay your feed for a year. He said he was Captain Tin Shai of the Chinee navy.

"S'pose you sabbee sea pidgin," he whispers close, "can catchee more dollar. Can do?"

"Can do!" says I. I would have answered the same if the job was blowing bubbles with a bagpipe.

"Allee time one day thirteen dollar," says he, "and chow."

"Chow?" says I, cocking me ears. Me mouth was watering; for the perfume of leeks played around him like St. Elmo's fire at a masthead. So I said I would first sample the chow; and he grinned, for he thought he had bought me from Uncle Sam.

He had but to gurgle three words in the ear of his private boy, when in five minutes we sat disputing the body of a pheasant, with trimmings to tickle an emperor. I jumped at it with me knife, destroying as much as I could of it sitting down, then as much as I could standing up, while the Chinee kept squirting me tumbler with siphon and whisky. I was all but flustered at such luck; but the Chinee never turned a hair. He set fingering his rings and soaking me in through his goggles, that were framed in tortoise-shell; and I see he was shaven as clean as squash on a vine, and so smug that ye would n't believe he would steal the end of a rope. He seemed to be glad that I held such a stowage of liquor without misspelling me words, for he nodded and says I was "plenty good

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man"; and when he shoved me a handful of *High-Life* cigars I shook hands with meself beneath the table.

"What 's me pidgin?" says I, softly, for fear I should wake meself from a dream.

"Some day," said Tin Shai, "China Empelor come tellee my: '*Ship makee walkee!*' So fashion Portegee engine-man go down-side, lightee match, makee steam, makee choo-choo, chop-chop down river. Your belong top-side: pullee stling, talkee sea pidgin, makee swear, makee ship walkee ploper. Allee time no makee smash. S'pose allee time makee plenty good walkee, bime-by catchee more dollar. Can do?"

"Can do!" says I; and he pays me a week's wages on the spot.

This craft was a bald-sided block of wood, with a clump of bare poles and lines like a Japanee bath-tub. Some greenhorns would have turned her bottom side up, turpentining the crew till they learned the meaning of work, and civilizing her out with chlorid of lime. But I 've spent too long in them climates to waste disinfection on manners ten thousand years old. Seeing that the robber that built her by contract had given her fixed port lights all through, I stove a hole through the glass of a room I dug out for meself, and called it a day's work. Then I went into a snake-sleep to cheat the heat of noon. For in these Chinee summers the heat of your blood leaps two degrees for every time ye curse.

"Ye 're a high cock in the Pigtail Marine!" says I to meself, when I waked and chuckled at me job of killing the Emperor's time. "If but Adam and Eve was alive to see this day!" I says, lighting me cigar

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as if I had the world in chancery; "for ye 're mate of the coffer-dam *Walking Chinaman!*"

The Portegee engineer was named Gargonza, and he was a bit short at me till he twigged how I was made. Then he cracked a bottle of beer, which I drank with joy and took a dislike to him; for now and then he would watch the effect of his words as bald as ye scan a target.

"Me—you," he said, with a wave, "of this ship there is no human being but us. Then we swear the good friend—eh?"

The *Walking Chinaman*, he says, was troubled with two captains, Tin Shai and Mu Kow. Tin Shai was only somebody's son; but Mu Kow had worked up from Secret Remover of Christians in a province back by Tibet. At first Tin Shai was captain alone; and a Britisher had the job of adviser and drilling the crew. But one day the Britisher come aboard and observes Tin Shai on the knee of the sentry, being spanked with his own sword for cheating at fan-tan; and the Britisher remarks that such scenes would not occur in the service of the Queen. The government then gives the Britisher his walking papers and took all the ammunition and side-arms away from the ship; and they appointed Mu Kow as twin-captain, believing, by Chinee arithmetic, that two captains would make half as much trouble as one. But beyond abolishing the sentry by sinking him over the stern one night, and beyond selling the ship's boats and life-preservers to a Scotch man-o'-war,[1] the two Chinee could strike no better a chord. What brought them a trifle toge-

[1] A Clyde-built merchantman.

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ther was that they had just been twice summoned to Pekin concerning them missing boats, and they balked, afraid their ankles would be cracked with a club.

"I see you, I smell-a the mouse," says Gargonza. "Why I must clean-a the white lead of four year from her engine? Why put in the coal and hire the sailor? I think-a to-morrow they run with the ship!"

"St. Peter!" says I to meself, wondering how I would get her down river without a pilot. Gargonza leaned over and tapped me shoulder.

"What good two Chinee like them captain?" he whispers. "No good—eh? But she would make-a the beautiful South Sea trader! Tin Shai, Mu Kow, they have sent many to water the seaweed. In the city we say: 'There is always the room at the top.' Good! On the sea: 'There is always the room at the bottom!' Me—you, we cannot remember what will happen—eh? You have pistol?"

"On your life!" says I, with a slap on his back that made him cough. He stared after me, doubtful of what I had made of him—which was a yellow dog.

The next one I met was the fellow Mu Kow, who paid his respects with extra dry, which he made me pour down on the top of me beer till I feared the shifting of me cargo.

"That Tin Shai one baby," he remarks, trying me first with one swivel eye and then with another. "My belong number one captain. Tin Shai plenty talkee, plenty silk, plenty jade—one little land-pirate. Some day he makee my too muchee bobbely; then sea-debil come catchee! You my good brother. My pay you one week."

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I took this double wages as proper, since I was serving two masters. But I measured his style and the scar that ripped his cheek; and I chalked him for one that would stab with his left while shaking hands with his right. Them two captains and the Portegee, I says to meself, were half the parts for a hangman's morning. And in case they had shipped me aboard for the *Walking Chinaman's* live mutton, I hailed a wheelbarrow and trundled up-town to heel meself at a gunsmith's.

That evening Tin Shai and Mu Kow turned out to a big mandarin, that arrived with hammering gongs, with a rag-bag of coolies carrying signs, and with white ponies and red umbrellas. The mandarin sat in his sedan-chair, with the captains kotowing. They pulled their fingers and hoped his grandmother was frisky, and wished all the time they could stick a knife in his ribs. The mandarin was reading them hot chapters on the Chinee hereafter, as appeared, till they thought they heard the rattle of chains. He wheeled off blowing curses, with the gongs beating the dog-trot retreat; and Mu Kow took me aside, his eyes sprung apart like an alewife's.

"Want-chee go choo-choo down river, chop-chop, two 'clock," says he, locking arms with me. "Can do?"

"Can do!" I said, seeing a vision of our craft with her nose fathom deep in the mud. Gargonza pulled at me sleeve.

"Four year I wait-a for this!" he says in me ear.

We set out to make ready, while the captains loafed in their spandy clothes. They sent ashore for some

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Sing-Song girls, which, with the fellers that brought them, all night made the cabin thick with cigarettes and the stringing of a strum-strum. Tin Shai was gassin' and gigglin' equal to the girls themselves; but Mu Kow sits fanning himself in a corner, squinting at a white silk Sing-Song girl, who had a line of gold poppies wandering over her that would cost as much in New York as in China would buy the whole girl. She was no dough-faced doll, like most of 'em. Ye could see she had thoughts skipping about in her head; and, for a Chinee girl, she was as pretty as comes. She see me at the window and marveled at me clothes, and the girls all laughed and invited me in. But I would n't go, for the way they shut their throats and squawked their songs like pea-hens cut into me ear.

The Sing-Song crowd was still aboard when I raised the ladder to clear the float; and at two o'clock I took the wheel, and, by word from Mu Kow, started ahead. The Sing-Song outfit broke for the gang-boards; but the captains kept calling "Chop-chop!" and I sent her ahead full speed to please them. There were screams and a fight going on, but I could n't leave the wheel, for I saw a chance to slow up in the wake of a Frenchman that was towing down-stream and would show me the way. In a while Tin Shai and Mu Kow come dragging between them the white silk Sing-Song girl, that was crying as if she thought to be boiled; and they pulled her little soft arms as though to divide her, each shouting that he was the one that had held her aboard and should own her now. The sight of it got me straight in an ugly mood; for it was plain to

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me then they had kidnapped her, and 't was as well for 'em they compromised by locking her up in the pilot-house and giving the key to me. The little thing stood mourning at the window, like a white silk spook in the moonlight; and I begun to sour a bit on me job, saying that Chinee ought to keep with Chinee, and men with men. But the job would end soon enough, I thought; for we had no running lights and our whistle had been sold for junk, and we had not a scrap of a chart. I hugged the stern of the Frenchman till he kept hailing and dancing on his poop; but, by luck, we made the passage down the river without fouling the Frenchman nor the bottom. I unlocked the pilot-house and fixed a place for the girl to sit down.

We passed Woo-sung with the sun up twenty degrees, and the Chinee captains were peeping an anxious eye at the line of forts. They turned so pale at the sudden blast of a gun from there that I had to laugh. 'T was the fellow ashore a-firing the morning salute, and he would n't believe the sun was up till it showed from behind the clouds. The Yang-tze stretched before us, bigger than the Mississippi and twice as dirty, with its low shores lying blank for miles. Now I saw the white bodies of the American fleet, as smooth as swans, with their bright work dazzling in the sun, and Old Glory swung out bright to the breeze—the handsomest that floats. I saw their guns laid aft, as trim as feathers on a gull; and when I looked down on the bath-tub I was cruising in, and on her little old Armstrongs aiming at all points of the card and rusting red in ten different ranges, I swore at meself for shame of me Chinee job. When

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I tried to dip my dragon flag I found it was nailed to the mast, so that the watch on the *Heron* was howling in glee, and I run up and threw down the rag in strips, while the Chinee captains smoked their pipes and discussed me gumption.

"Git on to the Chinee without a pigtail—and his wife in the glass case!" yells Peter Bynes, louder than the regulations, from the deck of the *Valley Forge*.

We left the fleet hull down up river, and the heat closed in on us more and more, like the walls of a steam-chest, till noon brought Gargonza up from the engines as pale as a pineapple. I tripped the anchor and fell into a hot doze, with a little white Chinee girl fading before me framed in a window.

And I was but pounding me ear comfortable when I had to rush up to see what was causing the racket on deck. I met the crew all scattering for cover; and here was Tin Shai and Mu Kow rampaging with drawn revolvers. Tin Shai had a-hold of the Sing-Song girl, hiding behind her and too scared to remember his own weapon, while Mu Kow was dashing in circles, trying to drop him without hurting the girl. She was screaming in hysterics, and such an uncanny sight as this wall-eyed rascal raging for murder I never see outside of a waxworks. When they heard me they backed away, and the Sing-Song made a plunge for below, never stopping till she discovered my room and hid under my bunk, gold poppies and all. The next second the captains were talking polite as potato-bugs, and they smiled and said they had given the girl to me, for which I did n't say thanks. But I went down and hauled her out by the nape of the neck, all trem-

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bling and jingling with bracelets; and then I stroked her till I had her tamed. She was a fresh little piece, cleaner for having cried off the red lead and rice-powder. After she had stared a long time at me she seemed to give me a pretty high mark, for she suddenly turned to and squared up me bunk so well that I could n't stay out of it. Gargonza found her on guard at me door while I tackled me nap again. He wanted to get gay with her; but she hissed like a she kitten, and I give him a laugh. I asked him where in the Pea-Soup Sea this cruise was laid to, and he says we had come to collect the junk tax at the mouth of the Yang-tze-kiang.

When I waked, the Sing-Song was doing her hair in front of me glass in a black braid as thick as a hawser. And the jade and gold pins and ruby rosettes she had on the table would have put shame to a pawnshop. I hunted up a brush for her, and from that time on she followed me round like a pet doe, grabbing me sleeve if any one looked at her twice; and she would pick all the threads off me coat, and would rub me boots with a rag till I felt uneasy most of the time. The captains were worrying to be under way, and the crew were watching down river, gesticulating whenever they saw a junk. A big fellow bound in from Formosa, with forty in the crew, tacked by under our nose, and I could n't see why, if we were tax-collecting, we let this one go. I took the wheel and we made toward the mouth, me expecting each moment to end the cruise with scarring the river-bed, for the Yang-tze kiang is a big drain that does n't remember its way overnight. As we made the delta—a mirage of an

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island just above water so far from the shores of the stream that you needed a glass—we sighted a middle-sized junk. By direction I kept the lubber's line dead on her; and as she would n't pretend to hear when Mu Kow passed her word to lay to, I went ahead and lanced her in the wing with me bowsprit.

The people of the junk no sooner saw Mu Kow boarding him with two pistols and a swarm of coolies than they crowded into a sampan and sculled for their lives. They left an old woman dealing out rice in the galley over the stern; and she must have been deaf, for she did n't notice. The next minute I see Mu Kow catch her by the foot and trip her overboard, with an iron pot tight in her hand. She went to the bottom like lead, with a look of astonishment on her face; but she never let go of the iron pot. I gasped. The Sing-Song clutched me and begun to cry.

"Collect-a the tax!" grins Gargonza. "See the many case of the opium! Say, our share will be large. But better the South Sea, eh?"

I give him a shove.

"Ye murdering son of a vampire!" I yelled to Mu Kow. "The next one ye heave over, ye 'll keep his company!"

I come down from the bridge and went to me room to hide me rage. So I was piloting a pirate craft, was I? The Sing-Song shuddered so that I thought she would shake out her teeth. So I shut me mouth and took to calming her, with her tears all mixed with her Chinee language. Pretty soon she dried her eyes and curled up alongside of me, and then we held a long palaver, each of us telling what we ought to do, and

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neither one understanding the other. She touched the revolver in me pocket and motioned at the door; I nodded and said to meself I needed small provocation. I would leave at the first opportunity, getting the girl to some safe place; and I would plant commas in the Chinaman that blocked me. The crew was working fast at the loot in the junk, and Gargonza was passing us with little packages. They were piling like ones outside me room, and at dusk Tin Shai looked in as far as his nose to explain.

"That belong your share," says he, pointing, and trying to seem like a matter of course.

"Ye heathen peacock!" I yelled, bowling the bottom of a chair at him.

He disappeared like a bubble; and then I see the junk float by the side, filling with water. I took a look at the river. It was ebbing rapidly, but we were stock-still. We had drifted aimless ever since I left the bridge, and the sun had gone down, leaving us bosomed on a shoal.

I see no sign of the two captains; but they never sent better chow than that night. The Sing-Song would sit on a stool behind me, no matter what I said; for she could n't handle the Pidgin lingo; and she would smile and then whimper when I scolded her stupidity. Ravenous though she was, she would wait, Chinee fashion, till I pushed her each mouthful; and she patted me sleeve and did n't want me to get angry. I says to meself there was many a brunette at home that would give the tip of her tongue for the color of such eyes. Then she blinked and fell asleep, crumpled on the floor with her head against me knee. Along

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come Gargonza, feeling the first prop of his liquor, and he sent a leer at the little heap that gave fidgets to the toe of me boot.

"Ah, what for do we linger?" says he to me, pointing out of the door. "The beautiful plum hang ripe on the bough, and the South Sea call like the music! Say, there are many wives down there—their eyes do not slide like these. Tin Shai, Mu Kow, they will take-a the cold bath—eh? The ship will turn blue; her name will be *La Paloma*—the dove, the fat dove. The crew is raw—yes; but me—you, we can boil-a them—eh? This is the plain Pidgin—I always speak-a the honest—I am very brave; but I cannot tell-a the lie. What will you do?"

I looked in the ball of his eye.

"Ye can take your dirty tricks," says I, "and go to a hot hereafter."

"By God," says he, scarlet as a bull-rag, "not like-a the you will *me* interfere! I wait-a four year to be stop by the sailor that make-a the skulk from his ship? Huh! I perform my own hook. I make-a the captain—you make-a the sea-cook!"

I inspected him close, and I saw he was two parts bluff and one part water, and had rings in his ears.

"How 'll ye get her out of the mud?" says I.

He went up to see what I meant. When he returned he wanted me to drink with him, saying we gentlemen should not lose our tempers; and how could I leave the ship, without a small boat, or even a hen-coop? There was n't a stick to float a dog.

"But never again the beautiful chance!" he whines, beginning to drift in his cups. "Listen! They

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smoke-a the opium. Tin Shai, Mu Kow, they buy-a the share of the coolie for silver—eh? Now the captain deal-a the fan-tan—they win all the silver back to themself! Santa Maria!" says he; "they are wise, but they are not brave. And you—you have not the ambition."

The smoke rose out of the hold, and the coppery clink of cash. I stared through me port at the rising moon, perplexing about to-morrow; and a notion of something ill-fated come clouding around; but I could n't see why. I took the Sing-Song, and we made a tour of the deepest parts, now all forsaken except the main hold, where the fan-tan game was on. Never a plank had been started by our pressure on the shoal; for all the water I found was mossy bilge. The Sing-Song took cue of all me moves, doing an imitation of me. She poked in the piles of dunnage faster than meself; and she struck three battered life-buoys, which on general principles we took to me room and made good with seizings of rope-yarn. The ship's compartments hurt your nose worse than the alleys of old Shanghai, and the air of the berth-deck seemed like heaven again. I was put to it to pass the time; for I looked ahead to no sleep on a pirate ship. I commenced to sing, trying to teach the girl the tune of

Me pigtail is two inches long!

—which was a favorite aboard the *Valley Forge*. But the girl could no more keep a tune than walk a tight-rope, though she strove till she brought the tears. "Ye 're a daisy," says I, "but ye can't throw your voice." I paced in the moonlight, calculating on the

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tide. We had struck at around six in the evening, leaving some three hours of the ebb. At three or four hours of the flood we might hope to drift off, and perhaps we would fall in with some honest craft. Now there was nothing in sight but a dim lighthouse, and 't was that silent that somehow it give me a touch of the nerves. The Sing-Song pulled out a rubber ball and went bouncing it on deck, pirouetting on her heels between the bounces. I laughed at her little brown legs, and she begun doing funny. She give a reproduction of a Shanghai rooster that would have killed the reputation of me friend Jimmy Snort. It brought up Gargonza, loaded to the guards.

"Sh!" says he, pointing down the main hatch. "One by one they will sleep on their pipe. Three o'clock I am full control! Sh! Let not the bat out of the keg, eh?"

I blew me cigar in his face, with the Sing-Song peering at him from under me elbow. I wandered back and set in me chair, lighting cigar after cigar to keep me awake. The Sing-Song showed me her rings. There was a diamond set in jade, which she would n't let move from its finger, however I urged her. When I pulled it a bit to see what she would do, she started to blubber. She made signs which I understood that some devil would get her if she once let it slide from her hand. So I put them all back, and she went purring and drowsing near by, with a big blotch of oil on her sleeve. I set playing with the end of her braid, and heard nothing but the clink of coin, which seemed further and further away.

I must have dozed off with a Manila smoking in me

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teeth, for I come to by and by with a start. The candle was burnt to a naked bit of wick, and flickering in its death-struggle. The moon was shining bright aslant through me port, and the Sing-Song flat in her slumbers. I heard a lapping of waves, as if a wind had sprung up; and behind me a dropping of water: *spot, spot, spot!* It was water leaking through the hole I had smashed in me port glass, and falling from the sill to a puddle in me bunk. When I jumped up me eye fell on a dead level with the Yang-tze River.

"She 's sinking," says I.

She was six feet deeper in the water than her danger-line, and the *spot, spot!* coming faster. There were seventy of us aboard the *Walking Chinaman*, and three life-buoys. I took off me shoes, then scanned fore and aft from me door. There was no sign and no sound. The lamps burnt even in a mist of stale smoke from opium, and the deck was dry as a bone. With a moldy blanket I stopped the hole in the port; then I pressed a hand on the Sing-Song's forehead till she waked natural and caught me commands. We crept into the passageway, with her silk sleeves seeming to sing against her sides as loud as steam. The spar-deck was like a churchyard, all blue moonlight and black shadows; and there was a fretting of the breeze in fits and starts, no one way twice. I reckoned it about twenty-four hours since we had cast off at Shanghai, and now the tide was within an hour of high; but we had not budged an inch off the shoal. And what bamboozled me complete was to see a lantern down in the engine-room, burning in the crank-shaft well. The ship laid as trim as if in dock, and

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she was sinking without a drop of water in her. Already the port of me room was hidden below the surface.

I let down the lead. First it showed by the mark two fathoms; then, slow but taut, it commenced to pay out more. And it would have kept on forever, for I knew what was up. We had run on to one of the Yang-tze quicksands such as I had heard of. We had settled with the ebb till the sand had a grip like an octopus and held us while the tide rose. Pretty soon the water would flow over our sides and down through the hatches, and then we would slump like a thousand tons in a slough.

The Sing-Song kept pulling and pointing at the water, which was gurgling through the scuppers and backing up fore and aft in the gutters. She turned pale; but she remembered and did n't say anything, and I liked her for that. I says to meself, there was no knowing what might part us two in the next few hours: so, despite her objections, I made her stow half the money I had, to stead her if she got ashore without me; and she tried to make me take some rings in exchange. Then I strung the revolvers around me neck. There was no stir from the crew; but a damp stench of opium and Chinamen rose out of the hold, and a glimmer along the floor showed pairs of sleeping legs. The water was high on our ankles and dribbling now down the hatch; and a coolie got up and slipped in the wet, and voices began asking questions. Then we ran for the bow with our life-buoys. I grabbed the girl and jumped into the sea; she took a sharp breath, but stayed game, and I rigged her into

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a buoy before she knew it, and we floated in safety. The buoys were lashed in a triangle abreast of the ship, and I held to a line from the anchor-davits. I would not cast adrift in this sea of mud till I must; and the extra buoy might save two or three of the rascals below, but which ones I had n't yet thought to decide.

There come a yell, and a coolie pounded up the ladder, and dashed forward maudlin with fear, and hammered at the cabin doors. He must have expected the captains to bale out the hold with their hats, for the water had leaped clear of the hatch-coaming and was roaring down in a deluge. It raised a steam of shrieks as though it had struck hot iron; and it ought to have given a turn to those that laid in a stupor below, thinking that drowning was part of an opium dream. You could hear the perpendicular iron ladder rattle with feet, though the moon still shone on a lifeless deck; for the coolie that first appeared had dove beneath the galley stove as the only dry place in the world. Then they begun galloping up from the hold, howling, with their faces purple in the light—one, two, then twenty in a string, hauling themselves over the pouring brim like devil-fish. They saw it had n't done any good to get up there. They saw it half spent with the struggle it cost, and they all went raving crazy.

I never hear such yells since the steam-pipe burst on the old *S'wanee;* and yet when I looked off over the deserted waters, and see no ship and no light and no land,—nothing but the river glistening in the silent moon for miles and miles,—the nose seemed but trifling small. A score of them were fighting like fiends for a salt-box that would n't float one. A horde of

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them screamed and scratched on the deck below like the bilge-rats that scurried among their feet. I heard a voice call: "Wake-a me! Santa Maria, I cannot dream-a no more!" and the rest in another lingo. I shouted back, but I don't know what. The Sing-Song pointed to Tin Shai running up the main ratlines, chased by two of his personal staff. He clung to the top, with a foot on the fore-and-aft stay; and when the other two grappled to see which should pass the part where the ratlines narrow to nothing, Tin Shai kicked one of his servants into the air. The other one bawled out in joy, and suddenly looked in the muzzle of Tin Shai's revolver. He turned to back down; but the water was rising beneath him, and he stopped and looked up again into the barrel, and saw a flash. Then his head lolled to one side and his fingers loosened, and he scraped down along the shrouds like an empty shirt. "Wake-a me!" yells the voice from below, wandering far astern. We see Mu Kow at the spider-band of the foremast, sawing away at the rotten ropes. The mob beneath him had pulled the salt-box to bits, and now they all swarmed after him over the shrouds. They climbed by the ratlines and they climbed on each other, snarling and tearing, while Mu Kow sawed. Half-way to the top, and the shrouds give way to his knife; and they fell in a howling heap on the iron winch, that was covered with three feet of water. A few of them flopped for a moment like stranded fish, but the river quenched their groans. The stillness came down like the firing of a siege-gun. All that the Sing-Song and me could see of the *Walking Chinaman* was Tin Shai and Mu Kow, treed like cougars, at the tops of two masts that shone a short way out of the water.

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The two blackguards clung cursing across at each other with revolvers in their hands. My line had pulled till it brought me floating midway off from the sinking spars. Either one of the two that saw me starting to save the other was ready now to shoot at us all; and their two foul lives were not worth chances to me. But I could not cast off and leave them, as the Sing-Song would have me do. I leveled me revolver and called them to throw down theirs; but neither would stir till the other did first. And we waited in a deadlock, with the tide at their waists and the end approaching, when there would be nothing left of the mastheads and they could n't shin up further. My arms grew so fagged and shaking that I should n't have hit a whale; and the sweat rolled off their brows like rain. They rested their chins on the trucks, scowling with gaping mouths, as if they were pinned to the spars by swords through their bowels. And the Sing-Song took to deriding them.

"*Hoo*-uh-chaah! *Koo*-uh-chaah!" she sang at them, or sounds like that.

Then she screamed at the sound of their guns, and they were firing so fast I could n't see. In the midst of it Tin Shai gave a howl and bit a piece out of the truck, with a trickle of red on his neck. His revolver exploded as his head sunk from sight. I felt a sharp cut in me head and the blood rushing up from me toes. Mu Kow reached out his empty hands in prayer.

"Can do? Can do?" he cries to us.

But the moon went dancing so that I was paralyzed; and the Sing-Song jerked the bowline from under me arm. We floated away in the current, and I lurched and buried me guns to the breech. When I rolled

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back again I thought I saw Mu Kow's head chasing on top of the water to swallow us; but it was the moon turned black.

She kept yanking me face out of the water, and talking with her lips to me ear. Everything was gray as clay, except a red stain on the sky-line. I blew out a throatful of the dirty stream. "Wake me!" says I, with me neck feeling the size of a finger. Then the sun was beating down on me brain, and she all the time sprinkling me and fussing with something that bound me head. She dug her nails in me jowl and made me look up river. I saw a swift white swan, with a yellow bill and a hundred-foot bonnet-string trailing aslant of her; and me head toppled over on something heaving and soft. "Daisy," says I, "but can't throw her voice!" Then I heard eight strokes of a silvery bell, and the shrill of a boatswain's whistle. Somebody holds me up to the bowl of a United States spoon. It was Jimmy Snort, the apothecary's boy.

"Why," says he, "we put the little Sing-Song aboard of the North Dutch Mail about three hours ago. The cursed little spitfire scratched me face, and had to be taken from ye by force."

I felt in me pocket. Every dollar I had given her was back in its place; and on me finger was the jade diamond ring.

"How 's your morals?" grins Jimmy Snort.

"No worse!" says I, lifting off the scruff of his neck. "And me respect for the kind of sex which you ain't," I says, "has risen to par, from the end of the land to the end of the sea."

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